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THE PRICE OF LEADERSHIP

THE PRICE OF LEADERSHIP

BY

JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

Author of

*Keats and Shakespeare, The Life of Jesus,
Heaven and Earth, etc., etc.*

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PREFACE

THE germ of this book was three lectures which I was invited to deliver in the summer of 1937 by the Incorporated Society of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools. Unfortunately, the summer school at which they were to have been delivered was abandoned; but I am grateful to the Society for inducing me to think out my views on the function of education in the modern world. Parts of Chapters IV and V were given as a lecture to the Peace Pledge Union at Swanwick in August 1937, and published as a pamphlet entitled "God or the Nation?"

Dr. J. H. Oldham encouraged me to expand these lectures into a book. Thus, I found myself struggling to elicit a positive theory of society as the necessary basis of a conception of education which should not float in air. That it is a Christian theory of society is not due to any *parti pris* on my part. It is true that I believe that only a Christian theory of society can command the allegiance of the imaginative reason; but that is because the imaginative reason is the power by which we are enabled to face the truth of things. It is the truth of things that compels us to a Christian theory of society. It is because

Christianity is the only realism that does not lead to despair, that it is the necessary basis of a human education.

In the effort to work out this Christian theory of society, I have made copious use of two great English pioneers of education in the nineteenth century—Thomas and Matthew Arnold. In doing them justice, unwittingly, I have done injustice to their peer, F. D. Maurice, whose work I began to study only when this little book was finished. I could not treat his contribution, or his significant place in the succession from Coleridge, without expanding the book far beyond its prescribed limits. I have tried to make amends by beginning and ending with two passages from Maurice's *The Kingdom of Christ*. The first of these is an exact statement of the belief which inspires this book.

I believe that every circumstance in the later history of Europeans has been enabling the Church in each nation to discover, if she will, what her powers are, how much greater than those of the statesman—how indispensable to those of the statesman. In the first age, spiritual discipline tried to be everything. Since that time, outward law has tried to be everything; the existence of spiritual discipline has been forgotten. Thus, then, I think we are coming to a time when the spiritual side of Christ's Kingdom must come forth into a prominence which it has not yet assumed; *when the education and discipline which the*

Church exercises will be demanded by each nation for the preservation of its own existence. But the Church, I believe, can only profit by this great crisis in the history of mankind, if she be ready to acknowledge that according to the will of her author and her Lord she is not meant to have an independent existence; that she is not meant to be extra-national; that she has no commission or powers which dispense with the necessity of positive, formal law, and with outward government; that her highest honour is to be the life-giving energy to every body in the midst of which she dwells. (*The Kingdom of Christ*, 1842. Vol. II, p. 396.)

J.M.M.

August 10th, 1938.

CHAPTER I

THE LADDERS TO LEADERSHIP

I SOMETIMES stay in a sparsely populated parish—containing one hundred and forty inhabitants—in what may be called an unspoiled part of the country. Every youth or man in the village works on the land, including the innkeeper. The inn, which stands by itself on the high road, which is still called the turnpike, and an empty house, which used to be the Rectory until the parish was united with the adjoining one, are the only large or largish buildings in the whole hamlet; except the village school, which stands at the end of the Rectory drive.

The village schoolmistress is a friend of mine: she has an assistant, and between them they teach just about forty children. Once every two years on an average, at the age of eleven, a boy or a girl gains a scholarship to the secondary school, ten miles away. And once every two years my friend the schoolmistress is asked by the parents of the child what they are to do about it? The people in the village are becoming steadily more sceptical about scholarships. In their experience they lead nowhere. There is a quite intelligent girl, one of the daughters of the village car-

penter that was—until he was knocked down by a motor-car on the turnpike four months ago—who won a scholarship and is just coming to the end of her time at the grammar school. She is nearly sixteen. What is she to do now? her aggrieved and widowed mother asks the schoolmistress. The girl herself would like to be a shorthand-typist. But who is to pay for her training at the county town, twenty-five miles away? Obviously, there is nothing for her to do but to go into domestic service; and just as obviously, it would have been better for her if she had entered service at fourteen instead of waiting till sixteen. She would have been more adaptable and less rebellious.

It is the same with the scholarship boy from the village. There is nothing for him at sixteen except to return and go on to the land, which he would have done far better at the age of fourteen. He may possibly get employment as a lorry-driver with the haulage contractor three miles away: then he will earn good money for four or five months while the harvest of sugar-beet is being carted to the factory, but for the rest of the year he will be on and off the dole. What other openings there are for boys in the larger village—of about a thousand inhabitants—five miles away—are bespoken long beforehand by the boys of that village. Of what earthly advantage, one asks oneself, is a scholarship to the grammar school to any child of this hamlet? And the only candid answer, it seems to me, is None.

Now let us look at the educational problem from a different angle. I said that the village carpenter

was killed not long ago. He was, I believe, the only man in the village who did not actually work on the land. He was a good tradesman, as they say—a good man at his job, and he always had plenty of work. He earned very good money, by local standards: between £3 and £3 5s. a week, for he generally worked a nine-hour day. Now there is no village carpenter. And the irony of it is that one of his sons, who is still below school-leaving age, passionately desires to be a carpenter. Where and how is he to learn the trade?

In this case, exceptionally, there is a job for a boy—a real job which might well last him and satisfy him to the end of his life. Moreover, it is a job that any one of half a dozen boys in the village would like to have. I know that, because the schoolmistress tells me that the boys who go from the village school for carpentry instruction to the manual school at the larger village five miles away, are so eager to be carpenters that the carpentry instructor has to make a little speech to each batch of new boys: “I know you all want to be carpenters. I’m sorry. But you must put that out of your heads. There aren’t any jobs for you.”

But why, you may ask, can’t one boy be trained for the job that is open? Who is to train him? He can’t take on the job at fourteen, with what he has learned at the manual school. He would have to be apprenticed to somebody. Where is anyone to be found who will take him on? The wheelwright’s trade has gone to glory. When a new farm-tumbril

comes that way—which is seldom enough—the body is mass-manufactured; the wheels are stamped, like so many buttons, out of steel, and the shafts are iron piping. There is still room for a jobbing carpenter in the village, but in mending rather than making. But it can't be filled. The old wheelwright's shop used to employ two or three apprentices continually, who could afterwards set up on their own. No such local possibility of learning the craft exists to-day.

Thus there appears to be a complete hiatus nowadays between our educational system and the life of the country-side. It is true, and lamentable, that the life of the country-side is gradually decaying. The mechanization of agriculture (of which I have given a simple example in the machine-made farm wagon) is gradually depopulating the country-side. They are not notably progressive in the neighbourhood I speak of; but I am told that, in spite of the sugar-beet subsidy and the wheat-quota, where there were four men on the land ten years ago, there are three to do the same work to-day. But my present point is that even the few jobs that exist cannot be filled; and—the crowning irony—that secondary education by scholarship is a handicap to the boy or girl whose parents are tempted to let them take it. The girl returns, reluctantly, to domestic service, the poorer for two years' missed training: the boy, reluctantly, to the land, with the same disadvantage. Yet surely, in a decently ordered community, the girl would be

assisted while she was being trained to some occupation that is valuable in rural life, and demands something more than average intelligence. They are still woefully short of trained district nurses in the countryside. Why not give her the chance of becoming one? Why not give the boy the chance of being trained at a really first-rate technical school as a combination of craftsman-carpenter and village handyman? And why not leave the ordinary grammar-school education to the village boy of really exceptional *intellectual* ability with a reasonable chance of finding his way to the university?

I am talking of the boy from the village. And I know, quite well, that my modest, parish-pump suggestions are but the merest tinkering with the problem which I am going to try to raise. I have begun by mentioning the obvious educational dislocation that stares me in the face in a familiar village; and I am inclined to generalize forthwith from these simple data, and say that they are evidence that the educational authorities of this country simply have no imaginative conception of the life of the country as a whole. They just don't think about it; and I suspect that they just daren't think about it. I read very carefully the speech of the Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Education, when he presented his first estimates in June 1937. It fell to him to do it, because the President happened to be in the House of Lords. I forget the name of the President; but I understand he was once a Guardsman—which is a curious kind of qualification for this particular

post. But probably it didn't make the faintest difference. Anyhow, the Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Kenneth Lindsay, began his career as a Socialist. And I am bound to say that my experience of Socialists in general is that they simply are not interested in the basic problems of education. And, so far as I could tell from his speech, Mr. Lindsay wasn't interested in them either. He produced a good many figures, and a lady Parliamentary private secretary, and a peroration, which I will not quote, though I am tempted to: because it seemed to me sad and superficial stuff.

The debate seemed to me but little better: apart from the raising of one practical problem by the speaker for the Labour opposition. He objected that children in the elementary schools had to sit for a scholarship examination at eleven years of age; and on the result of that examination depended their chance of climbing the good old "educational ladder", whereas many children simply could not and did not reveal their potentialities in examination at that age. This is true enough, and a criticism well worth making. But even in that speech there was not the faintest intimation that the "educational ladder" was not, in itself, an entirely satisfactory thing—the only question being whether eleven was the proper age to be pushed off it for good.

More remarkable still, considering that the opposition is nominally a Socialist opposition, there was no reference in any of its speeches to the patent fact that the educational system of this country is a dual one:

that, no matter how capacious and broad the educational ladder may be, it is still hardly less true than it was thirty years ago that there are two distinct kinds of education in this country—one for the rich man's son, and another for the poor man's. Of course, I know that that is a rather crude statement, and that the division is not quite so hard and fast. I am myself an example of the poor man's son who managed to get the education of the rich man's son, and was to my own amazement at the age of ten pitchforked out of a London Board School in the last month of the nineteenth century into one of the great sixteenth-century foundations—perhaps the only one that had not wholly forgotten its original purpose: the education of poor boys. There I was taught the classics and nothing but the classics; and thence I automatically proceeded, on a classical scholarship, to the university. A hundred years ago I should just as automatically have become a clergyman.

Speaking roughly, I should say that there are now two educational systems in this country: the first contains three main kinds of education: the education of the elementary school, the education of the secondary school with its grand finale in the School Certificate, and university education—mainly technical or scientific. That is one system. Then there is another and different system, which may sometimes in theory be completely assimilated to the first system, and may at certain points touch it closely, but is nevertheless quite independent. In this system

the boy begins with the preparatory school, passes to the public school—in the case of the exceptional boy by way of scholarship, but for the great majority by way of the Common Entrance, and thence sometimes by way of the university, into the Army, the Church, the Foreign Office, the Law, professional politics, the City—into positions that can be adequately described only by the Socialist phrase—positions of the ruling-class. One sphere in which the two systems are partially blended is the Civil Service (absolutely excluding the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service). There, it is possible that the proportion of men deriving from the first system of education is as high as one quarter to-day.

Still it remains roughly true that the education of the ruling-class is a quite different kind of education from that of the rest of the people. It is a very expensive kind of education, and from it the poor man's son is virtually excluded. For the great majority, education is of two brands: elementary education ending at fourteen, and secondary education ending in the School Certificate. The passage from one to the other is relatively easy. Again roughly speaking, through this system passes the whole working-class of this country: elementary education for the manual worker, secondary education to the School Certificate for the huge army of the minor technical and administrative salariat.

One striking difference between the two systems—of ruling-class and working-class education—is that the education of the working-class is almost exclu-

sively an "intellectual" education; advance within the system is determined almost wholly by written examination. Whereas the education of the ruling-class is not only quite as much physical and moral as intellectual, but in it different values from the merely intellectual are emphasized: first and foremost, *esprit de corps*, the sense that the school is far more important than the individual, and that the authority of the school tradition is at least of equal weight with the authority of the master. Secondly, there is a definite subordination of intellectual values to what used to be called in Victorian days "training of character". The phrase may be out of fashion; but the process goes on. The public-school boy is brought up to believe that intellectual distinction is a secondary matter. It is enough if he scratches his yearly remove. The outward sign and symbol of this transvaluation of values is that in all public schools it is regarded as more laudable that a boy should get his cap or his colours than he should get into the sixth form. This has been, and still is, vehemently denounced by some as the worship of athleticism; and, assuredly, in the form it generally takes I do not defend it. But I am compelled to recognize that, however crude it may be, it is an open expression of a refusal to admit that intellectual values are supreme; and that this refusal is pragmatically justified. "The flannelled fool at the wicket, the mud-died oaf at the goal", of Kipling's contemptuous line, has a trick of turning out to be precisely the man whom Kipling most admired. An instance is fresh

in my mind. One day I was glancing through my school magazine. Someone, with a non-committal name, was being congratulated on his appointment as Governor of a territory as big as England. The dates showed that he was not merely an exact contemporary of mine, but in my house yet, for a moment, for the life of me I could not bring him to mind. Then suddenly I remembered a boy of certainly not more than average intelligence by my standards then, who left school at about seventeen, but had already won his place in the school XV as a splendid three-quarters.

Boys of such potentialities, men of this type—the public-school system exists to create, or at least to allow to create themselves. They are not discarded because they do not shine in examinations: on the contrary, they are encouraged to regard examinations as subordinate to the process of real education (or whatever you call it) to which they are being submitted. This system of values often takes the extravagant form of an avowed contempt for the boy of mere intellectual distinction, which is a sort of survival of the old feudal contempt for the cleric: of the fighter for the learned man. But there is to my mind no doubt that, however lop-sided the public-school system of values may be, it is much more realistic and effective than the system of values which prevails throughout the elementary and secondary education of what we have called the “working-class”. The whole public-school system, based on the early segregation of the boy from the influences of the

home, and on his absorption into a different and exclusive society, with its own code of morality and its own values, and above all with its tacit insistence that this morality, and these values, are more important than mere intellectual distinction, makes for a real social coherence.

Heaven knows, I little thought when I began to write this book that I should appear as the ostensible panegyrist of the public-school system, to which I am pretty deeply opposed. But I am not opposed to it for the usual reasons. I do not believe, as most of its critics do, that its defect is that it disregards or underestimates the intellectual values, or what are called the intellectual values to-day. That seems to me its strength. I am opposed to it because it is a class-system of education: that is to say, a system of education reserved for the rich. Crudely put, my ideal is a public-school education for everybody who would profit by it: not at all what other critics seem to desire, the destruction of the public-school system, and its replacement by a vast extension of the existing system of working-class education with its specious uniformity.

By a public-school education, in this perspective, I mean primarily a system of education in which the memorizing intelligence is resolutely deposed from its false supremacy. Even though Keats said it, it is true that "memory should not be called knowledge". This mechanical memorizing may be a tolerable test for aptitude in the barrenly repetitive jobs of modern

industry; but a brief intelligence test would serve just as well. For the majority of boys, the knowledge they acquire beyond the three R's is irrelevant to their occupation in after-life. That would not matter if it were the beginnings of real knowledge—the simple apprenticeship to a genuine intellectual *method* which might be developed by any subsequent experience; but as things are, they waste time and energy in acquiring a smattering of accomplishments which are useless from the practical, and barren from the liberal point of view.

For the great majority of children, as D. H. Lawrence said, the real goal of education should be not knowing, but doing and being; and even for those in whom emerges the true aptitude for knowledge—which may be roughly defined as excellence in the liberal arts and sciences—being and doing should be ranked as of at least equal importance. The educational process should be, or should aim at being, one in which, at whatever point the child is to emerge from it, he should emerge as a complete being, or one with the germs of completeness in him. Completeness may be simple or complex; but the boy who has learned to do a job of creative work, which engages all his faculties, with thoroughness and pride, is a completer being than the majority of those who obtain a passable mark in a dozen different subjects and a dozen different papers.

It can hardly be denied that the public-school and university education is much more definitely concerned to achieve some completeness of being in the

schoolboy than the state-educational system is. Public-school and university education is related to a boy's after-life precisely because it is chiefly concerned to shape his character, his "manners" in the old sense. The pattern may be criticized, but no one can deny that it exists, or that it has a traditional basis. It is a class-education in the important sense that it is an education into a code of behaviour, and more subtly into a conception of "honour". No doubt this is possible only where there is a sense of privilege to make the appeal of *Noblesse oblige* a reality. But the distinctive spirit of the *Ecole Normale* and the *Ecole Polytechnique* in France shows that this sense of privilege and its desirable derivatives are just as possible where education has an equalitarian basis. What the French call *le ton de la maison* is a reality in either case.

In England education of this kind is, roughly speaking, reserved for the children of the well-to-do. Actually, the proportion of ex-elementary schoolboys at Oxford and Cambridge (which has greatly increased since the War) is now about 22 per cent; but when we consider that the number of boys attending elementary schools is at least one hundred times as great as the number of those in preparatory schools—from the point of view of social justice it is ridiculous that they should have only one-fifth of the places at the ancient universities. To talk of equality of educational opportunity is fantastic. But that does not imply that it is humbug. Let us look at the phenomenon from two angles of view—both of dis-

interested observers. First, Sir William Beveridge:

One reason why clever boys from the poorer sections of the community do not proceed to the ancient universities in larger numbers is not lack, or inaccessibility, of scholarships, but that boys with abilities of scholarship standard often prefer to go to work direct from the Secondary School. As it has been put to me by a schoolmaster of great experience, the parents are not sufficiently convinced of the advantages of a university education to take the risk of letting their boys sit for scholarships; unfortunately, they are occasionally supported in this attitude by observing particular cases of poor boys who have gone to the university and do not in the end find it easy to get suitable appointments. (*The Times*, June 27th, 1938.)

This, says Sir William, is a confirmation of his thesis that "Universities cannot safely be much more democratic than their environment". Of that thesis more anon. But let us first consider the finding of an entirely detached observer with a remarkable eye for the niceties of sociological phenomena in this country, Professor Adolf Loewe, late of Frankfurt and now of Manchester. He describes our educational system as "most ingenious".

On the one hand, it really furthers the rise of all the available talent and its absorption into the upper-class. On the provincial universities de-

volves the task of raising the more gifted offspring of the petty *bourgeoisie* into the middle-class. Oxford and Cambridge prepare the intellectual *élite* of all classes for the political and economic leadership of the country and beget the intellectual succession. On the other hand, under the plutocratic organization of education the candidates from the lower classes can make their way only by bursaries. They are therefore subjected to the intellectual, but above all to the social conventions of the ruling-groups. Probably in no other capitalist land can a talented man or woman rise so easily as in England. But it is also probable that in no other country is such a measure of personal assimilation demanded as the price. (*The Price of Liberty*, p. 21.)

Sir William Beveridge and Professor Loewe—the English and the German observer—confirm one another. But Sir William Beveridge is really saying that the process of social absorption which Professor Loewe genuinely though critically admires has reached saturation point. The aspirants to the ruling-class are now too many.

If we uncover the social import of Sir William's thesis, that the older universities cannot safely be more democratic than their environment, it is surely this: that the moment one seriously faces the problem of establishing a more equitable method of recruiting boys to be educated for the ruling-class, one is involved in the necessity of a social revolution;

and what is significant, of a distinctly unpopular revolution, for it would involve "debunking" much of the current superstition of democracy and equality. According to that superstition there is no such thing as a ruling-class in this country. That seems to me pious nonsense. Professor Loewe speaks frankly of the ruling-groups; and, though Sir William Beveridge discreetly avoids such a phrase, his thesis tacitly assumes their existence: we can only have, he says, a very partially democratic system of education because we have only a very partially democratic system of government.

But, although no unbiased observer could deny the existence of a ruling-class in England, it seems plain that the actual ruling-class in this country is essentially different from what the theorist of Marxist Socialism means when he speaks of "the ruling-class". He means by that phrase a definite economic class—the owners of the means and instruments of production; and this purely economic definition of the "ruling-class" has the effect of substituting the function of owning (if it is a function) for the actual function of administering and ruling. By this feat of abstraction, the Marxist is able to conceive a condition of society in which, because ownership has been abolished, ruling is also abolished; and that (I think) is a fantasy. Abolition of an owning-class would not at all involve the abolition of a ruling-class, as we see, in fact, in Russia to-day, where the new ruling-class is as sharply differentiated from the mass of the people as it was under the old régime.

So far from the "state" showing any signs of "withering away", it is more compact, more powerful, and more efficient than it was under the Tsardom.

Many Socialists have great difficulty in admitting this obvious fact, because it runs counter to the Marxist prophecy of a "classless society". That Russia is on the way to becoming such a "classless society" can be held only by those to whom ownership constitutes the sole differentiation of a class. They have forgotten, if they ever read, Plato's *Republic*, in which he imagined a society in which the class-differentiation was based not on ownership, but on function; and the ruling-class was prohibited from owning, and despised it. There appears to be some approximation to this condition in Russia to-day. But the real and manifest existence of a "ruling-class" there is surely indubitable.

"He who administers, governs," said Mirabeau. A ruling-class is necessary in any form of society that I can conceive; and more necessary than ever in the complex and integrated society of the machine age. The questions are, how this ruling-class shall be recruited and by what "beliefs" it shall be guided? The first of these questions shall concern us first. In England, as in most countries to-day, it is recruited from the relatively rich. And that, in practice, has proved to be a fairly elastic arrangement in the past; because in an advancing capitalist country there is a continual influx of new recruits to the wealthy class. Witness the sudden expansion of the public-school system in the eighteen-forties and fifties, when the

wealth of the new capitalist class generated a sudden increase of the number of boys to be educated into the ruling-class: and the majority of the modern public schools were established, or refounded then. The same phenomenon recurred, though less violently, in the boom years succeeding the War: a new set of public schools was founded. And in this phenomenon we can see, in concrete and historical shape, the distinction I seek to establish between a capitalist-class and a ruling-class. A capitalist-class is the raw economic fact: to become a ruling-class, it has to be educated into the function and the code. That takes another generation.

CHAPTER II

PIETY AND PLUTOCRACY

I AM enough of an idealist, or a Christian, to find it, at first sight, distinctly sordid and unworthy that a ruling-class should thus be recruited from the new rich. But when I have the patience to reflect, it is pretty plain that this is how the ruling-class has been recruited ever since the full feudal system began to break up. In the fifteenth century in England two new classes began to supply their quota to the ruling-class: the merchants and the lawyers. And the same phenomenon seems to have occurred then. Eton College was founded to provide a semi-secular education for these new recruits to the ruling-class. And thus we can follow the thread of development backwards to the homogeneous feudal-clerical society of the Middle Ages, and see the nature of the change that was taking place, of which the foundation of Eton was symbolic. Eton was the new school for the *nouveaux riches*. Founded in 1441, it is a landmark in the development of English society.

Previous to that time, "education" in the modern sense was the monopoly of the Church. There was, of course, a non-intellectual education for the feudal

nobility—an education which mainly consisted in sending boys to be attached to the households of feudal lords. But from those educated by the Church were recruited the great officials of the central government; and, of course, the Church needed an army of officials of its own to administer its Kingdom within a Kingdom. By means of the Church came a precious element of flexibility into the system: because the Church was to some extent recruited democratically, as we say. In combination with our English custom of primogeniture, which worked as a negative leaven from the opposite end of the social order, the Church provided the necessary prophylactic against stagnation in a relatively stable society—a non-hereditary component in the ruling-class. This component could maintain its effectiveness only on the basis of a real spirituality, and to the degree to which the ideal of Pope Gregory—"to subjugate the world to Christianity by the instrumentality of the spirit which renounces the world"—was realized. In proportion as the Church became secularized, the system failed, as it had previously failed in the eighth and ninth centuries.

The struggle between the natural appetite of men—to assert the Self—and the supernatural effort of the Christian towards self-renunciation was incessant; it was also complex: for the self-assertion of the natural man and the self-renunciation of the regenerate man were always struggling with one another in the Church itself. Christian humility and devotion continually became sources of secular power,

for the simple reason that, despite themselves, men do revere the highest when they see it; and secular power was for ever choking the impulse to self-renunciation. Yet, I think, so long as the physical energy at the disposal of the natural man stood in a natural relation to his natural being—so long, that is to say, as the traditional relation was not catastrophically disturbed by power-production—so long, however precariously, would the spirit of self-renunciation have retained or regained control.

However that may be, the moment came when the feudal aristocracy again felt itself absolved from reverence for the Church by its corruption, and was not afraid to regard the positions of power and emolument in the Church as its own appanage. The Church, lacking saintliness, succumbed to the pressure, and as it succumbed, became the more discredited. The process was complex and gradual; and this is not the place to attempt a description of it. The principle of necessary Order was secularized. In the interstices of the slowly disintegrating fabric of the clerical-feudal society arose two new secular classes—the merchants and the lawyers, needing a money-economy for their existence and creating a money-economy by their existence: classes dependent upon a secular principle of Order. In combination with the feudal aristocracy now brought to heel by the first Tudor, under the second Tudor they dispossessed the Church. The spoliation of the Church was, as it were, the bone thrown to the possessing classes to distract them from the centralized and

unitary government, which was created while they quarrelled. It was a move as dangerous as it was astute; for while the Crown, half-consciously, thus assumed the functions of the Church in regard to society, it dispossessed itself of much of the necessary means to fulfil these functions, and thus prepared the situation which led to the Civil War.

From this point in our history onwards we can say that wealth was the qualification for entry into the ruling-class. The spirit of Christian piety, under the ægis of Puritanism, effected an alliance in the individual with the impulse of wealth-accumulation. Coleridge, I think, was the first to remark how the reduction of Christian faith to an emotional experience, and its consequent divorce from the labour of thought and learning, made possible an immense concentration of energy on what we now call "success" in business. Religion and education began to be parted, in the vital sense that Christianity was no longer the beginning and the end of education. Salvation and culture were separated from one another. To some minds that is as it should be; not many wise are called, they remind us. But it is on the calling of the wise to the simplicity of Christ that the possibility of a Christian *civilization* depends. The cleavage between secular wisdom and divine election proclaimed by the Puritan and the extreme Protestant is a disruption of man's human nature which must tend to barbarism; it was in effect a monasticism of this world, which liberated the natural

man to a new piety of wholly secular activity. In the name of Christian truth, the word of Christ was abrogated: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Against that religious background we see, first, how the complete secularization of society was unconsciously accepted, and, second, how vast was the liberation of psychic energy for the pursuit of wealth. In this new order of things the fact that wealth had become the primary qualification for entry into the ruling-class was neither so surprising, nor indeed quite so repugnant as it sounds. Wealth-accumulation did now provide a rough and ready criterion of the most enterprising and energetic elements in the nation. What there was of religious fervour in the English people was directed ultimately to the goal of wealth; the enthusiasm kindled by Wesley, the piety of the Evangelicals, the Quaker austerity, found final utterance in its pursuit. So that we cannot be wholly surprised that the motive which finally determined a sensitive spirit like Newman's to abandon that Church, of which his mind was to bear the impress to the end, was his desire for saintliness. There was no room for a Christian saint in English Christianity.

English saintliness had found its account in this world. The observation sounds cynical, but it is not cynically intended. Let us suppose that the moral energy available within a society were measurable. It would probably be found that the proportion of this which seeks expression in self-devotion or spiritual heroism is fairly constant, or varies within

narrow limits. It can either be concentrated, or diffused; and although it is in a sense a solecism, or worse, to speak of Christian saintliness as diffused into Puritan pietism, as a figure of speech it may suggest a truth. England after the Reformation had no place for saints, but it did afford room for the expression of moral energy in wealth-accumulation, in political development, and in the establishment of a widespread moral discipline. This last is now too easily derided as the middle-class morality of the Victorian age, by which time it had become the dominant morality of British society: but those who deride it are guilty of a lack of imagination. They do not realize how slow and patient is the process by which a society is, even crudely, moralized. *Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem*. Moreover, it was from the moralized and successful middle-class, in which the leaven of Puritanism had slowly done its work, that the prophets of a new catholicism mainly sprang. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Newman, Keble, Ruskin, the two Arnolds, F. D. Maurice, William Morris—these spring from the unsatisfied aspirations of the religious secularity of the new middle-class.

During such a period wealth-accumulation did afford a not altogether sordid and fairly reliable criterion of the most energetic elements within the nation. And this held good, in ever-increasing measure, throughout the great period of capitalist expansion—let us say, a period of gradual crescendo and gradual diminuendo from 1650 to 1900. That is

a long period of human history; and it is the epoch of British political and economic hegemony, the epoch which may be known to future historians as that of the British Empire: during which we came to regard ourselves as a ruling race, and there came to be established in the mind of the average Englishman of whatever class a subtle, instinctive, and not wholly unwarranted identification of the pursuit of individual wealth and the pursuit of national strength and prestige. However vulgar this may sound, it was pragmatically justified. Capitalist enterprise was an index of national energy, and individual wealth-accumulation a rough indication of the elements of the nation in which its spiritual energy was concentrated. Granted the rough and ready methods with which Nature must operate, the wealth-accumulators during such a period were the best available matrix of a ruling-class. Moreover, that system of evaluation and selection in such a period had the moral and religious approval of the vast majority of the nation. It was not so much that the acquisition of wealth was hypocritically sanctified, as that the actual religious energies of the nation were turned to that pursuit. England of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was an organic and moral whole.

The transmutation from actual wealth-accumulation into membership of the ruling-class was (as I have said) produced by education. The process of education throughout the nineteenth century preserved a connection, though one which grew more

and more tenuous, with the old Catholic Christian tradition. The predominant tone of the older universities up to 1850 at least was still ecclesiastical and even plumply monastic. However Erastian the Church might be, education into the ruling-class was completely controlled by it. A majority of the masters, and nearly all the headmasters of public schools were in Anglican orders as late as 1900.

In the social world beyond, the outward semblance of the feudal social hierarchy was maintained. At first rarely, then more frequently, at length almost automatically, the large-scale wealth-accumulator became a knight, a baronet, or a peer of the realm. And this was generally felt to be right and proper; it was felt to be natural that the traditional positions of social prestige should be the reward of those who represented, in an eminent degree, the highest value that was universally recognized. They were, by the accepted standards of the time, the best men; they formed what was, by the current and instinctive criterion, a genuine aristocracy, called by natural and moral law to inherit the privileges of the aristocratic tradition. By the remnants of a traditional education they were shaped and polished, in the second generation, to play the part. True, even so late as 1870, Matthew Arnold, who was an exceptionally keen observer, maintained that the government was still entirely in the hands of the upper-class—the Barbarians, as he then called them—but the condition of the rule of the Barbarians was that they must obey the wishes of the Philistines—or the new nonconformist middle-

class. There had, however, been a generation of the middle-class before that, which had been assimilated to the old order. He himself belonged to it. So long as the older universities were closed to Dissenters, complete assimilation was the necessary condition of a liberal education; but it was the leaven of the new middle-class in Oxford that engendered the Oxford Movement—and distinguished it so pertinently from the old High Church party—just as it was the political pressure of a still newer middle-class which compelled Oxford to open itself to nonconformity.

But in fact, as we have seen, the real dynamic of the movement which culminated in the political triumph of the new middle-class, and in the final breach in the monopoly of the Church of England in the older universities, involved a reduction of Christian faith to an emotional experience and a separation of it from humane wisdom and learning. The shifting of the central point of Christian experience to conviction of sin and conversion dissociated it from the social texture of men's lives. It seemed to the Puritan, and subsequently to the Evangelical, that a Christianity which centred on the sacraments was external and perfunctory, as no doubt it tended to be; he could not see that by these age-old rituals, quite apart from their inexhaustible significance for the imagination, the social implication of Christianity was maintained. By them men were reminded that Christian worship was primarily a social act; and that Christian profession was the condition of full membership of the secular society, which therefore could

never be wholly secular. To be an Englishman was to acknowledge oneself a member of a Christian society. In such a society it was natural that the Christian Church should be "established", that is, endowed by the nation, and that education should be under its control.

Against such a conception of society the Puritan was as rebellious as he was against such a conception of religion. Religion was a man's private affair; it was what he made of the Bible. Really, that was all a man needed, to be able to read, to read the Bible and to be saved. The notion shattered the old tradition that Christianity was the nexus of society; that the necessity of uniformity of profession and worship was self-evident; and that uniformity of profession, so far from being a constraint upon the spiritual liberty of the individual, was the real condition of that liberty. Just as I should not be a freer man if I were to have insisted, as a little boy, on inventing my own alphabet: so the symbols which have been shaped by centuries of exacting human experience offer a precious economy of spiritual effort. To reject them is to impoverish and cabin men's capacities.

The most zealous Puritans by dissociating themselves from this social tradition of Christianity powerfully contributed to the lamentable secularization of the Church in the eighteenth century. The most religious spirits were outside it; and, as we have seen, their spiritual fervour became diffused into secular pursuits. Their business was religion, and their re-

ligion was business. The Church of England became a hollow shell, and its endowments and foundations a preserve of the landed interests, as scandalously exploited by them as ever the medieval Church had been by the feudal nobility or the Papal Curia. Even the old universities practically ceased to perform any educational function. Thus Christian sentiment, finding no true expression in a cynical and perfunctory Church, secularized itself into a nascent movement of equalitarianism and political democracy. Christian energy was diffused into business enterprise, and Christian brotherhood into radicalism. So that eventually, side by side with the active principle of social order whose working has been described—namely, the continuous recruiting of the ruling-class from the wealth-accumulators—there co-existed a principle of a different kind: which we now call the principle of democracy, but which was generally called, at the turn of the eighteenth century, the Jacobin principle of personal rights. According to this principle, every individual member of society, irrespective of his property, or his capacity for wealth-accumulation, had a right to an equal share in the political sovereignty of the nation. Theoretically, by this principle every adult member of society became a member of the ruling-class. But necessarily he had to exercise this power by deputy. And that gave the opportunity for the pragmatic reconciliation of the democratic principle with the generically different principle of natural selection of a ruling-class by wealth-possession and wealth-accumulation. It was

tacitly taken for granted that the democratic and equal electors would always choose a member of the ruling-class to "represent" them; that is to say, they would, in fact, hand their inappropriate and embarrassing political sovereignty over to those who had been marked out by nature as fitted to exercise it. "*The Times* tells us," said Matthew Arnold in 1864, "that the real ruler of our country is 'The People', although this potentate does not absolutely transact his own business, but delegates that function to the class which Eton educates."

And this is what happened, with practically no exceptions, until the very end of the nineteenth century. Again, it was felt to be a just and proper arrangement. The possessors and accumulators of wealth were designated, not only by nature, but by the standard of values prevalent among the majority of men, to be the governing-class. It appeared, therefore, that the sole function of the democratic system, during that halcyon period of British prosperity which lasted from the Great Exhibition until the death of Queen Victoria, was to enable the mass of the people to recognize as the ruling-class *de jure* what was the ruling-class *de facto*. This procedure, when stripped of its camouflage, was curiously like Shakespeare's picture of democracy in *Coriolanus*, when the great soldier asked for the voices of the citizens to make him Consul: the one difference being that the free and enlightened British elector had few of the Roman plebeians' misgivings. He approved Nature's method of selection: he not only

believed that the wealthiest were the best, but he knew that money was required for the luxury of a parliamentary election, and still more for the career of politics.

At the turn of the century there were the beginnings of change. An increasing number of working-men came to feel that their interests could not be adequately represented by members of the ruling-class: and they thought it advisable to club together to finance elections and support Members of Parliament. This was regarded by many members of the manual working-class itself, and by *all* members of the clerical working-class, as a monstrous and unseemly innovation; it was felt to be improper that Members of Parliament should be other than "gentlemen". But as the movement for an independent political party of the working-class grew stronger, and acquired the financial backing of the great Trade Unions, it attracted the support of a good many "progressive" politicians from the ruling-class: some were sincere, some felt that they were on a good thing. When the curious amalgam of working-class and ruling-class representatives of the working-class took office, it did not work very well. The more astute and adaptable of the working-class representatives were almost wholly assimilated to the ruling-class, and the others were simply obedient to the permanent Civil Service—which was the ruling-class not in its political, but in its administrative aspect.

The point I wish to make is that the period of

really harmonious and progressive working of the British political system, as a nominal *democracy*, was that in which the democratic franchise was exercised to confirm *de jure* the *de facto* political power of a ruling-class recruited from the wealth-accumulators. This period was succeeded by a nondescript period in which the working-class made a half-hearted effort to exercise political power in independence of the ruling-class, and failed, primarily because it was forced, in fact, to depend upon and act through the existing ruling-class. The nominally independent Labour Party had never faced up to the problem of the ruling-class at all. Neither has it done so since; nor is it doing so to-day. During this whole period of Labour's half-hearted attempt at political control, the process of recruiting the ruling-class has gone on precisely as it did before. Labour has never dreamed of really challenging that. And, in consequence, there is a fundamental unreality about Labour politics, which (it seems to me) is being discovered instinctively by the ordinary man. He feels that Labour offers no real alternative.

Behind that felt absence of a real political alternative in Labour government, is the solid fact of the absence of an alternative ruling-class. And the creation of an alternative ruling-class really depends on the complete revolution of our present dual system of education. That in turn depends upon the existence of a general determination that the most important type of education (let us call it education for political power) shall not be a monopoly—or a virtual

monopoly—of the wealth-accumulating class. The creation of such a general determination is in itself a social revolution; and I am inclined to think that it is *the* social revolution. Unfortunately, it seems to me very remote.

It is a curious paradox that the equalitarian idea, which is the progressive and semi-revolutionary idea in democracy, itself militates against any attempt at a realistic solution of the problem of creating an alternative ruling-class. The very notion that there has to be a ruling-class, and that this class has to be created by education, and by education of a particular kind, is so repugnant to abstract equalitarian sentiment that it prefers to refuse to look at the facts. Moreover, it is in part prevented from seeing the facts by a stubborn prejudice concerning the nature of education, which appears to derive from its abstract way of regarding society. Education it conceives almost wholly as scientific; so that it tends to regard the kind of education that still survives in the public school and the older university as obsolete—a survival that can safely be left to itself to die out. This is a mistake, fraught with incalculable consequences for the future. What it means is that, in fact, the truly political education of this country is being left in the hands of people who are by instinct and interest opposed to any profound social change.

There would be no practical harm in that if profound social change were not necessary. The mere desirability, on ethical grounds, of profound social change is a motive which must appeal, at any time,

to few. Nor can the realist expect that a social system which works pragmatically, and has the tacit moral support of the great majority of the people, should be susceptible of other than gradual reform. But if the detached observer is forced to the conclusion that the system will not work much longer and that radical change is not merely desirable, but necessary, the situation is seriously changed. Then it becomes urgent to inquire whether the ruling-class as shaped by its education to-day is capable of initiating the changes that are necessary.

And that, it seems to me, is the bed-rock question with which we are faced to-day. I should diagnose the actual political situation of England as one in which the old and familiar system of "two-party democracy" is rapidly coming to an end. Its forms are still observed; but they are more and more façade. And I would incline to say that the beginning of the end coincided with the disintegration of the old Liberal Party. The Conservative-Liberal antithesis was an antithesis within the ruling-class—what one might call a healthy condition of creative tension. Theoretically, it was possible for the Conservative-Liberal antithesis to be replaced by a Conservative-Labour antithesis: and that is what the superficial observer might think has actually happened. But this, I think, is appearance only. The Conservative-Labour antithesis is not quite real; and the renaming of it as the National-Labour antithesis expresses, or conceals, an important element of truth. In the new antithesis the ruling-

class is almost wholly on one side—the National. That is indeed a commonplace with Socialists. But, as I have tried to make clear, they mean by the ruling-class something essentially different from what I mean by it. They mean by it a purely economic category—the owners of the means of production: I mean by it a really dynamic class—the class of men educated to rule—to rule politically, to take conscious decisions that determine the lives of the people of the country, and decide the future of society.

I maintain that this class of men, educated for political and administrative rule, is a necessary class in modern society—as it has always been in society; and that when this essential class of men is, as it is to-day, almost wholly on one side in a society that is nominally governed on a system of two-party democracy, the system of two-party democracy is doomed. It may persist as an outward shell, but the inward vitality is gone from it. And I suggest that this is the real cause of the curious phenomenon which is being widely remarked to-day—the widespread and growing feeling that there is no real alternative to a National government. That realization expresses itself, consciously, in the opinion that Labour offers no practicable alternative policy, but the underlying and more basic fact is that it contains no alternative ruling-class.

What that means for the future political development of England does not appear to me very doubtful: it means that we are heading for a peculiar form

of the totalitarian state. I think that the totalitarian states which have manifested themselves so far—the Russian, the Italian, the German—are deplorable forms of society. But that does not mean that the peculiar and novel form of totalitarianism for which we seem to be heading is necessarily damnable. Theoretically, I can quite well conceive a sort of *tertium quid* between Fascism and Communism; and practically it seems to be our actual destination. Totalitarianism, it is fairly evident, is going to be the prevalent political form of the near future; and it is equally evident to me that political democracy, in the form in which it has hitherto prevailed, is going to be either overtly and violently abolished, or surreptitiously discarded. But it is worth pointing out that a totalitarian government is not necessarily undemocratic, in one valid sense of the word. If the ruling-class in such a state is reasonable, that is to say, if it does not openly prefer its own interests to the interests of the community as a whole, *as those interests are understood by the majority of the members of the community*, there is surely no reason why it should not obtain and retain popular support.

Now if we suppose that the National government is never directly defeated—and it seems to me improbable that it will be—but that, just as in war-time, it remains sensitive to public opinion, and continually renews itself with a view to becoming more representative of that opinion, we have the natural nucleus of a democratic totalitarianism. We English have a genius for one thing: namely, for working

political compromises; and I see no reason to suppose that we shall be unable to evolve something less clumsy and discontinuous than two-party democracy, a luxury for which world-conditions allow no room to-day, and yet less repulsive and brutal than contemporary totalitarianism. Let us remember that the objection to totalitarianism is not that it obliterates political democracy, but that it obliterates freedom of thought, expression and discussion and abolishes all due process of law. We value political democracy really because it has historically been the instrument which has secured those civilized conditions to us; but if we can have them without the machinery of two-party democracy—we need surely not waste tears over scrapping some of the machinery. Anyhow, I certainly do not believe that the mere form of political democracy is any *guarantee* of freedom of thought, expression and discussion: in the stress of modern conditions democracies are just as likely as autocracies to silence inconvenient and unpopular minorities.

We need to free our minds of much cant about democracy. The moment it is regarded (as it generally is) as something which we have attained, and have only to retain, it has ceased to be vital. Goethe said that we had to conquer our eternity day by day: it is true of democracy, also. To achieve the form of full democracy (and that has happened only since the War) is merely the beginning of the real test upon society. For now the problem is to educate democracy.

Already English democracy has a bad record of indifference to educational realities. It has ignored the necessity of a ruling-class, and refused to concern itself with the education by which a ruling-class is formed. We have to try to do some thinking on behalf—not of the democracy that is, but of the ideal society by which alone existing democracy is justified.

CHAPTER III

THE RULING-CLASS

POLITICS, in the sense of traditional democratic politics (I said) was stagnant, because now the ruling-class was all on one side. Likewise, in the administrative machinery of the country, the responsible positions are concentrated in the hands of the same ruling-class. Just as there is no alternative political personnel, there is no alternative administrative personnel. Hence the unreality of such a creed as revolutionary Socialism, which is based on a primary confusion concerning the nature of a ruling-class. The English ruling-class does not rule because it possesses, but because it possesses a virtual monopoly of the education by which a class of men is trained to rule. That is a much more specialized function than is generally admitted. It is not identical with the capacity for organization, but it can enter into a fairly natural and strong alliance with it. We can see the difference if we compare England with America, where the pure organizational faculty is very highly developed; but the combination between it and the capacity to rule is rudimentary. America

has no ruling-class in our sense. Social equality is a very real thing in America, and the prevalence of the conception has prevented, or at least seriously retarded, the formation of a *ruling-class*; and that, in turn, has created a condition where business and financial interests are supreme and irresponsible. Big business in America is what Socialism mistakenly calls a ruling-class, but it is not a real ruling-class. Morally, the essence of a ruling-class is a sense of social responsibility. This sense of responsibility may be old-fashioned, it may be rudimentary; and certainly it will be a miracle if class-solidarity does not predominate over social responsibility: but I think the very idea of class-solidarity—when it is a moral ideal or moral convention—involves at least a germ of social responsibility.

It is difficult to analyse, and unfortunately the intellectual temper of to-day is definitely averse from psychological analysis of such matters; it prefers what it calls facts—figures and statistics, and intelligence co-efficients. It tends to regard economics as the reality of politics; and by so doing seriously underestimates, if it does not entirely ignore, the enormous practical importance of the realm of politics—by which I mean not “politics” in the conventional democratic sense: the “politics” which is, in England, still a respectable profession, but in America simply “a dirty game”, best left to dirty people; but what the Greeks meant by the word *πολιτική*. For politics, in this sense, the study of the formation and the ethos of a ruling-class is essential; and simply to

equate a political ruling-class with an economically dominant class, as is the habit among Socialists to-day, is to substitute a formula for the reality. No matter how hard it may be to describe or define the reality, it is foolish to evade it.

Tentatively, I should describe a ruling-class as a class of men wielding political power, and enjoying social privilege; but in whom social privilege is, to some extent, balanced by social responsibility. The degree of social responsibility may vary extremely; but it must be remembered that the criterion of social responsibility is not some abstract ideal, but the actual expectation of social justice which is generally prevalent in the unprivileged classes. That expectation changes very slowly. Equalitarianism, for example, is a nineteenth-century notion, whose life-history is very brief and whose roots are very shallow compared with the age-long practice of society as a hierarchical organization of mankind. The majority of men are content with a humble position in society, so long as they feel that their position is secure. Nor can they easily be brought to challenge the basis of the hierarchical order. That may change slowly, as it changed in England, where feudal and responsible property slowly gave way to private and irresponsible property; but the ordinary man has the stubborn feeling that hierarchy is necessary in society, and he has no natural objection to wealth being the main qualification for the higher ranks of the hierarchy. What he objects to, I should say, is a ruling-class of mere wealth: he demands from it

manners, education, and the aforesaid degree of social responsibility.

Abstractly, it is quite possible to imagine a ruling-class quite differently recruited from our own. We have an instance, in Russia, of a ruling-class that is quite differently recruited. In theory, the ruling-class in Russia is recruited universally. The Communist Party is drawn from the Communist youth-organizations, which exist everywhere. But I imagine if we were to inquire dispassionately into the actual process of selection, we should find that it was not much less arbitrary and accidental than our own, in spite of appearances. The major difference would be that membership of the ruling-class was, at least nominally, dissociated entirely from wealth-accumulation; but it is not dissociated from economic privilege, nor is it practically possible that it should be. I should suppose that, *mutatis mutandis*, the actual mode of life of a high official in Soviet Russia is not very different from that of a permanent civil servant in England. Theoretically, again, the hereditary element is entirely eliminated from the formation of the new Russian ruling-class; but it is only one generation old, and it is impossible to say how it will develop. Nevertheless, we may remember the medieval church in its hey-day for a time produced a non-hereditary ruling-class.

An approximation to the same system is being created in Italy; and probably also in Germany. In all three cases the origin of the new ruling-class is the

same. It is a development of the revolutionary political party, which is conceived from the beginning as a body of men who educate themselves to assume and wield political power. This is, of course, a totally different conception of the political party from that which prevails in England, or in any democratic country; indeed, it is quite incompatible with what is understood by political democracy, which is based on the theory of alternative political rule. But since, as we have seen, this theory of democracy corresponds but doubtfully with the contemporary facts, it is necessary to consider whether the new theory of a sole political party, which tolerates no opposition, and is in fact the ruling-class, is not more realistic than our own.

Roughly speaking, the functions of the new ruling-class are confined to administration. The strictly political decisions of the new society are taken by one man, assisted by a very small body of intimate advisers. And his powers seem to be pretty absolute. How far they are so, in fact, it is very hard to say: for the difficulties of analysing the realities of power, which are great in the case of an established system, open to inspection, like the English, become inordinate in systems that are mainly secret, like the Russian, the Italian and the German. The actual play of interests is impossible to determine. We can see no more than that there is an absolute ruler, having at his command a strictly disciplined body of men; that this ruler is invested with quasi-divine sanctity, and that—this is the difference between the

new absolutisms and the old ones—his position of power is based upon mass-approval. But how far he dares to contend against the will of the army, or the interests of property, in the Fascist countries at any rate, it is impossible to say.

In Russia, the old ruling-class was completely eradicated. The interests of property have largely ceased to exist, and the army is a totally new creation: and it has been recently shown that Stalin has the power to bring the army leaders to heel. In Italy, the army is in the main a new creation, and probably Mussolini has power over it. In Germany the army tradition was strong and unbroken, and it was for a long time doubtful whether Hitler could take up any position of independence with regard to it. It has been proved that he can. But those are the positions at the moment merely. It is obvious that the equilibrium is unstable; and that, above all in these days of modern armament, the totalitarian state may at any moment become an avowed military autocracy. That is largely due to the artificial creation of the new ruling-class, which has to substitute for class-solidarity, which is mainly instinctive, an overt and conscious military discipline. Implicit obedience to orders given from above is the *mot d'ordre*.

What we have in the new totalitarianisms is the emergence of a conscious, and consciously trained ruling-class, in the form of a politico-military order, dominating a society organized for war. That in the case of Russia, it is a war of defence; while in the

case of Germany and Italy it is a war of aggression is perhaps not so important a difference as sometimes appears: in either case "a state of war-emergency" prevails, and it is difficult to imagine this kind of political organization persisting except in such a condition of psychological tension. Hence, the extraordinary danger of such forms of social organization. In order to perpetuate themselves they need the tension, and they are bound to continue to create it. And it seems that when a ruling-class is educated and organized in quasi-military fashion, such an outcome is inevitable. Such a method of educating and organizing the ruling-class, in the old days, was relatively harmless, for then the economic integration of society was rudimentary: so that only a fraction of its energies and resources could be used for war. But to-day both the energies themselves are incredibly increased, and the proportion of them that can be devoted to war is vastly increased also. The militarized ruling-class threatens a technical civilization with suicide.

One is tempted to oppose to this the civilized ruling-class; but I think the truer antithesis is the politicized, or political ruling-class. This, I think, is incompatible with any absolutism. It is an aristocracy tempered and made flexible by the notion of representative government; and is above all a class accustomed to political responsibility, in the widest sense. It is the absence of such a class in the improvised democracies of Italy and Germany and

Spain that has made democracy practically unworkable there: as I think it is bound to be if democracy is conceived as an autonomous system by which the casual and uninformed choices of an un instructed electorate become the rulers of the country. Democracy in a modern nation can function effectively only if the popular vote actually operates merely as a continuous check on the actions of a politicized ruling-class, recruited otherwise than by popular vote. Under other conditions mass-democracy is unworkable.

This essential condition, as I suggested, is still satisfied in this country; but I suggested that we are nearing the end of the two-party system. Imperceptibly, owing to the exigencies of the total political and economic situation, our system of democratic government is obeying, after its own fashion, much the same compulsions which have enforced authoritarian governments on the Continent: the difference being that here there is a ruling-class, accustomed to democratic forms, to take the strain. Therefore, I see no reason why such a "democracy" as ours should not in fact be able to keep pace with the totalitarian countries, without having to sacrifice the form of "democracy"; although I think that the practical possibility of an alternative to the National government is likely to diminish more and more. More and more in face of the psychological compulsion towards war exercised by the militarized ruling-class in the Fascist countries, the predominant issue in practical politics in England will be the issue of

war and peace: and short of an absolute pacifism, there is no real alternative to the policy of the National government. The vast mass of the people is extraordinarily reluctant to be involved in an international war, for any cause whatever, other than an attack by Germany on France. The only chance of a Labour government would be if it could plausibly offer a more certain policy of peace than the National government: and this it cannot do. So that it comes to this: until the outbreak of war, the National government will not be dislodged, and with the outbreak of war, the National government will be reformed and strengthened.

In this situation, it is extraordinarily difficult to see what will happen. It is easy enough, from a point of view like mine, to say what ought to happen. Since, as I believe, the possibility of alternative government is steadily receding, it becomes more imperative to expand the ruling-class by the apparently indirect, but in reality more direct, means of education. This is also indicated by the relative stagnation in the process of wealth-accumulation: no great new influx into the ruling-class can be anticipated from that source. And anyhow it would come too late. The *tempo* of development in the total world-situation is unprecedented. The conscious concentration of national energies under the modern forms of authoritarian government marks an entirely new phase in world-evolution. And it behoves us to be at least equally conscious—in our own way. Our problem—seen from the angle of this present inquiry

—is how to avoid a militarized ruling-class, on the one hand, yet to create a more competent ruling-class on the other.

This, I think, can be done only by drastic educational reform. But the kind of educational reform at which we should aim is a very different kind from that usually demanded by educational reformers. If my arguments have weight, the worst thing we could aim at would be the abolition of the public-school system. What we should aim at is a “democratization” of the public schools: that is to say, their bodily incorporation into the state-educational system of this country. They should exist side by side with the ordinary secondary schools, and be under precisely the same compulsion to provide the same proportion of free places—and to them should be drafted off the boys who showed proof of a generalized rather than a specialized intelligence. Alternatively—and perhaps this is more possible of accomplishment—there should be founded at least two dozen state public schools, absolved from the uniform necessity of school-certificates, which should take the boy over as completely as he is taken over by the existing public schools, but should set themselves, with much more determination than the public schools do at present, to discover the boy’s real aptitude.

Parallel to this should be a system by which promising boys from the elementary schools should no longer be pitchforked, willy-nilly, into a process of secondary education which too often leaves them finally stranded and useless. There should be, in

the country-side anyhow, genuine schools of rural education. But, of course, it is no use deceiving ourselves in this matter. Unless there is a real advance in agricultural wages, the expertize of the skilled agricultural labourer will slowly decay. Boys who have to go reluctantly on to the land, as they do to-day, cannot acquire the manifold skill which is required of a good cowman or a good shepherd—or, incredible though it may sound to those who believe that making hay is a pastime or a metaphor, a good haymaker. In a sense, the best school of rural education is bound to be the best farm in the neighbourhood. But what I have in mind are the crafts which no farm can teach—carpentering, building in local materials, thatching, bee-keeping, and the rest.

Now, as we saw in the first chapter, there are reasons why the Labour movement is altogether uninterested in educational reform of this kind. Its theory of society is abstract and equalitarian; and involves an instinctive repugnance to admit the reality of a ruling-class (except in the illusory sense of an owning-class) or to recognize the necessity of educating men to be members of it. And on the practical side the average working-man still believes that the possession of wealth is the best and perhaps the only test of capacity. Consequently, the only kind of educational reform in which he is interested (and to give him his due, he is not very keenly interested in that), is that which leads, as he believes,

to equality of opportunity for wealth-accumulation. Therefore, the main purpose of public-school education, which is not to educate capacity for wealth-accumulation, but capacity to rule, falls completely outside the purview of the average working-man.

Thus it is that there is singularly little radical criticism of our system of education—and above all none which has behind it the weight of a real political dissatisfaction. On the large view, we may say that there is an historical parallelism between the situation one hundred years ago and that to-day. Just as a hundred years ago Dr. Arnold's genius at Rugby was leading the way in the reform of the old educational foundations and thus creating a system of political education for the new industrial middle-class, so to-day the emergence of the working-class to a position of power in the commonwealth is being accompanied by a vast development of state-controlled secondary education. If we could look forward to another such century of peaceful social development, we should probably find that just as Arnold's reform of the public schools reformed the old and created a new ruling-class, superior in moral quality and sense of social responsibility to the old one, so the new state-controlled secondary education would create yet another ruling-class. But, alas, England is not to be granted the prosperity of another nineteenth century to work out its evolution in comfort.

Moreover, and still more important, the basis of Dr. Arnold's reform of the public schools was the in-

culcation of social responsibility as the direct consequence of Christian belief. His was essentially a religious reform of English education. No doubt the strength of the religious impulse was weakened with the process of time; but Dr. Arnold's passionate conviction that if education was not definitely Christian, it would be actually anti-Christian, was effective enough to set the pattern of public-school education till the end of the century. By a Christian education Dr. Arnold meant an education based on the conviction that the national society was a Christian society whose purpose was to strive to realize the Kingdom of God on earth. He was no facile optimist: few men were more deeply convinced than he of the tendency of the natural man, or the natural boy, to evil; but he also believed that Christ offered the means for overcoming the natural evil of society. He was convinced that it could not be overcome by purely secular means. No political or social reforms in themselves, if they were once divorced from faith in Christ, could really resist the evil forces inherent in man. Either men must set themselves consciously and deliberately, under the leadership and inspiration of Christ, to realize the Kingdom of God on earth, or they would achieve the devil's kingdom instead. Neutrality in education was fatal: "He who is not with me is against me."

From this conviction of Dr. Arnold derived (I believe) most of the fine achievements of the English ruling-class during the nineteenth century. To it (I believe) we chiefly owe the enviable tradition of the

English Civil Service: and all that spirit of disinterestedness which a foreign observer more easily remarks than a native Englishman in the conduct of our public affairs. Arnold of Rugby is become a figure of fun to a disillusioned and cynical generation; I owe him the tribute of a public acknowledgment that he was a great man indeed. But the more I have come to understand and appreciate the magnitude of his single-handed achievement, the more startling appears to me the absence of any equivalent inspiration in our state-controlled education to-day. Religious neutrality in education has become a dogma.

Thus the last genuine educational reform in this country was in its origination avowedly Christian, and based on a Christian theory of society. By it a new ruling-class was educated. To-day, when the problem is to educate a new ruling-class, there is no theory of society at all underlying our education. Whereas the Russians, the Germans and the Italians are being consciously educated into a religious (though anti-Christian) theory of society, we have abandoned the Christian theory of society by which our last effective extension of education into the ruling-class was inspired. Our religion has descended into our unconsciousness; it has become completely politicized. If we have a God, his name is Democracy. What we mean by the word, we hardly know: nor is it permitted that we should seriously be taught the meaning—for that would be religious

instruction. But it is undoubtedly true that it is our religious sentiments that are outraged by the behaviour of the totalitarian states: only we cannot admit that the sentiments are religious. For, paradoxically, democratic progress in England has been intimately associated with the exclusion of religion from the process of education. That is due to our peculiar evolution, whereby political democracy has been a kind of by-product of the struggle for religious toleration and religious equality. We have achieved democracy by the curious means of proclaiming that all religions are equally valid; and in consequence, it has become a principle of democracy with us that education must be entirely divorced from religion.

Because in this country Protestant sect after Protestant sect came to the conclusion that religion was more important than anything, because one religious society after another was prepared to make heroic sacrifices rather than relinquish that worship of God which it felt to be the best—because, in a word, this country was exceptionally alive to the necessity of Christianity, it became a democracy. But so soon as it had become a democracy, the only kind of education it could allow itself to provide for its members was non-religious. A formidable paradox it is. A secular basis to democratic education is comprehensible enough in a country like France where the revolution into democracy was made against the Catholic Church; but in England, where democracy was mainly achieved by the religious passion of the Christian sects—the situation is very strange.

But it explains many things. It explains why, although our profound repugnance to the behaviour of the totalitarian states is really religious, we cannot make it conscious to ourselves as religious. It explains why we are subject to strange waves of religious emotion for semi-religious objects, like the League of Nations. The past enthusiasm for the League of Nations has been the expression of a Christian faith which we no longer know how to express consciously. The English people is for ever discovering fresh channels of expression for its suppressed Christianity—Societies for the Prevention of War, of Cruelty to Children and Animals, of Capital Punishment. It is continually being driven to re-form fragments of the Christian society which its religious individualism has disintegrated.

But an education which would enable it to comprehend itself as a Christian society—this it cannot allow. The cause of this refusal is hidden deep in the Protestant impulse, whereby in the overwhelming sense of the reality of a new and closer relation of the individual with God, the sense of universal and abiding social relation that is no less essential to Christianity was lost. Instead of the universal Christian society, Protestantism has tended always to seek for a society of the elect, and therefore to deny, implicitly or avowedly, the possibility of the approximation of the secular to the religious society. Hence, as the whole technical basis of human life has changed, and enforced upon society a totally new degree of integration, Protestant Christianity has stood

aloof from the new secular organization, necessary to society, and left it to evolve in independence of all Christian control. To this autonomous process it has finally surrendered education itself, until secular education has raised up a generation of men who are incapable of understanding the world in which they live. The tragedy of Europe to-day is that it is a Christian civilization that has lost the key to its own nature; and the fatal defect of our non-religious education is that it cannot teach men where to look for it.

CHAPTER IV

GOD AND THE NATION

THE condition of the world to-day is one of moral chaos: of which one of the most evident signs is the piecemeal, but now almost complete abandonment of the conception of International Law. Simultaneously the conception of equality before the law has collapsed between the nations, and has been consciously repudiated within the nations. First Russia, then Italy, then Germany took the significant plunge into outlawing considerable sections of their own peoples. This was not altogether new: it happened in the French Revolution. Nor in that case could it fairly be considered retrogression, since equality before the law certainly did not exist in France under the ancient régime. Likewise, in Russia equality before the law did not exist under the Tsardom. But the outlawing in Russia, not merely of those who had possessed a privileged status, but of the "capitalist" as such, and finally even of the peasant-proprietor; and still more the open approval of these methods by the Communist parties in Italy and Germany, where equality before the law had been precariously established, helped to create a

fierce and sinister counter-movement. The doctrine of class-war, *à l'outrance*, was one of the spiritual parents of Fascism. Another was the treatment of Germany after the War by the victorious democracies.

The doctrine of the conscious class-war is utterly different from the conception of the unconscious class-struggle; the change from unconscious struggle to conscious war is a change into the moral order. Conscious class-war involves the abrogation of law, both within the nation and without. It was Rousseau, I think, who saw, more clearly than any other political philosopher of the modern age, the vital importance of maintaining the supremacy, and expanding the rule of law, both within the nation and without. For him, civilization itself depended on this. The profundity of his insight begins to be apparent to-day. The nations by whose actions the slight fabric of International Law seems now bound to be destroyed entirely, are those which have repudiated the existing system of law internally. We have a habit of regarding the internal morality of a nation as something quite separate from its external morality. Because it is an intellectual habit, we do not easily realize how modern it is—or how unwarranted. It is on such basic modern conceptions that we need to dwell in order to understand the conditions of the world to-day.

The conception that the internal behaviour of a nation is solely its own concern is generally regarded as a triumph of enlightenment. In a sense and to a certain extent it is. In what sense, and to what

extent, we shall try to consider. But first we must realize that this conception would have been hardly comprehensible to a political thinker in the Middle Ages. If it could have been expounded to him, it would have appeared to him not as an advance, but as a manifest retrogression in civilization. That the internal behaviour of each country should not at least aim at obedience to a universal law would have been abhorrent to him as an idea; and fantastic in practice besides. For in fact the social and political organization of the European countries was pretty much the same: the village-community was universal in Europe. Still more abhorrent to the medieval thinker would have been the notion that there should not be some one universally recognized final authority, endowed with the power to bring to heel contumacious national authorities. Such an international and super-national authority, vested in the head of the Christian Church, was, for the medieval political thinker, the indispensable condition of civilization—the sole safeguard against moral and material chaos.

But the medieval system gradually collapsed; and, rather more slowly, the medieval ideals faded out of the minds of men. By way of the conception of a completely independent national prince, with no intermediary between himself and God, and therefore owning no real superior on earth except another national prince who could enforce his superiority by arms, the conception of nationalism came into being. I speak of these ideas as "conceptions", very loosely: they were conditions long before they were words.

Nations began to behave nationalistically long before nationalism had attempted an intellectual justification of itself. Concurrently with nationalism—a new relation between the nations—appeared a new relation between the individuals in the nations—which we call individualism. And here again, so much has individualism become a habit, it is difficult to realize that individualism is a modern phenomenon. At the same time that the national princes asserted themselves as supreme under God, there was a similar stirring in the ordinary member of society, and he likewise timidly began to regard himself as supreme under the King: and, of course, the process did not stop there. Even though the *tempo* of history was infinitely slower than it is to-day, this national equilibrium lasted—in England anyhow—hardly more than a century. It was as though the separate countries, now freed from the restraint imposed by their super-national allegiance, and freed also from the impediment to competitive “progress” imposed by the village community began to evolve independently at an alarming rate.

The point for the present purpose is that nationalism and individualism are concomitant and interdependent as historical phenomena. The conception of International Law, with capital letters, arose when the real and potent international authority had been undermined and finally destroyed. Therefore it is almost entirely an idealist conception—without any solid foundation in the real behaviour of men. Consider what a Hildebrandine pope could

do: he could paralyse a belligerent national potentate by absolving his subjects from their allegiance, he could place a kingdom under an interdict, he could make it clear to the simplest man that his immortal soul was being imperilled by the action of his prince. That was a real super-national authority. But what power to-day can absolve the subjects of a totalitarian state from their allegiance? Or even the citizens of a still nominally "democratic" state like this of England? There is none. So that ultimately in the modern world there is no right but might. There are various shadowy substitutes for that old super-national authority—the international Proletariat, which is a fiction, the international anti-proletarian Fascism, which is mere brigandage, and International Law as finally conceived in the nineteenth century, which is being revealed as illusory every day. One of the main nominal articles in this International Law is non-intervention in the internal affairs of other nations.

Non-intervention, even during the brief (or imaginary) period when it was seriously meant—and let us not forget how England threw the principle into the dustbin during the War, in the case of a little country like Greece—was an illusion and a makeshift. No doubt it was the best that could be done, in the period when the concomitant but contradictory ideas of individualism and nationalism were at their hey-day. But the contradiction was such that the mouldered concept of non-intervention was bound to fall into dust at the touch of reality: all it

really meant was that nations would not intervene except where their vital interests were involved, and that they were to be sole judges of what were their vital interests. But why should they intervene where their vital interests were not involved? The conception of International Law in the nineteenth century was merely a specious attempt to drape a lawless reality with the garment of morality. Now that the garment is in tatters, and the skeleton beneath it is revealed, we are all horrified—and impotent.

Vital interests! What are Germany and Italy and Japan doing to-day but preparing to defend or assert their vital interests? And where do vital interests end? It is a vital interest of Fascist Italy that General Franco should prevail in Spain. Who shall deny it? It is a vital interest of the Fascist Powers that Fascism shall not receive a set-back anywhere. Who shall say them nay? Is it a vital interest of the democratic powers that democracy shall not receive a set-back anywhere? Nobody knows. What we do know is that the inhabitants of the democratic countries want a great deal of persuading that it is. Nobody knows on the one side where vital interests end; and nobody knows, on the other, where they begin.

It is surely plain that this moral chaos means material chaos, in the near future; and it is equally plain that it can be composed only by the establishment of a real international authority. Yet one is almost ashamed to use the phrase to-day. It is used

by so many well-meaning people, who believe that they have only to desire a real international authority to get it. As always they do not know what is the reality of that which they desire or the price they must pay for it: their desire is for the end and not for the means.

Our comparison with the international society of the Middle Ages has shown what a true international authority must possess—namely, the effective power to absolve the subjects of a national state, or of any number of national states, from their national allegiance. Theoretically, the notion of the international proletariat comes nearest to satisfying this demand; but it is a mere notion. The Communist International does not in fact possess the power to absolve a majority of the subjects of the national states from their national allegiance; and, under pressure of the facts, it is resigning all claim to possess that power. And why? Ultimately for this simple reason—that the ordinary man in every country does not want to be absolved from his national allegiance, and certainly does not believe that the Communist International possesses the power to compel him from his national allegiance.

But the ordinary member of the modern national state does not recognize, or even dream of, any higher authority than the government of the national state. And the kind of recognition which is required is not an intellectual recognition; not the prevalence of the notion that there ought to be some higher authority than the national state, whether it be

the international proletariat, or the League of Nations. What is required is the downright, immediate, incontrovertible feeling that there is a super-national authority, and that there will be, quite literally, hell to pay if it is not obeyed.

How are you to get that feeling into the very bones of the ordinary man to-day? That is the fundamental problem of the modern world. And I sincerely believe that, ultimately, there is no other. That problem is basic and all-comprehending. Political panaceas that do not touch this problem—and none of them do—seem to me a tinkering with the body of decay, a mere decoration of the victims for the coming sacrifice, in which there will be no distinction between the destroyers and the destroyed. The humanity, on either side, will have been destroyed long before.

At this point someone is bound to say or think: "Ah, so what you want is a revival of religion." And, of course, a rebirth of religion is what I do want. Only what I mean by a rebirth of religion, and what the majority of people who ask for a revival of religion, or a recall to religion, mean by it are (I sadly fear) very different things. For the very essence of the religious authority we are seeking is that it should possess the effective power to absolve the subjects of the national states from their nationalist allegiance. Not merely the power to absolve them from it—that is in fact too mild a word—but the effective power to compel them to renounce their national allegiance.

Roman Catholicism, which is the only form of organized Christianity to-day that might theoretically claim such a power, has bargained it away long ago. But that is to speak foolishly. No Church has ever possessed the power to bargain away such a power. It exists only by the presence of real obedience in the hearts and minds of men; and that obedience could have remained an instinctive motion in the hearts and minds of men only if the authority had remained worthy of it—if the Bishop of Rome had never ceased to embody the idea of a supreme and divinely derived authority, that is to say, if he had never ceased to represent in idea and defend in practice a finer justice than is current among men. Men embody the divine authority at the peril of mankind: if they fail, in their actions, to remain at what Tolstoy called "the level of the highest life-conception of the age," they prepare the way for the gradual undermining and final destruction of man's belief in God.

However that may be, the real and actual belief in the divinely appointed and super-national authority of the Bishop of Rome perished long ago. One might indulge the dream that it could be restored. It is conceivable that it might be; but at what a price! An open and avowed breach with every national state: a declaration that the Bishop of Rome possessed an authority superior to that of any national government in virtue of which he would excommunicate every man who dared to prepare or participate in the diabolism of modern totalitarian

and scientific war. Such a declaration is not, indeed, unimaginable; and I believe that such a proclamation even to-day would "make bold power look pale". For I can believe that such an assumption of authority would create the power which it assumed, by giving a point of focus to all the unspoken and unconscious aspiration of the bewildered world to-day. I can even believe that it would recreate the reality of the Christian religion, because, in spite of themselves, ordinary simple men would believe that such an utterance was the oracle of God—as indeed it would be. But, of course, the price "the universal Church" would have to pay for that restoration of its divine authority in the hearts and minds of men would be to suffer persecution. The national states would seek to destroy it. They would not have the power to destroy it.

But that, alas, is a dream. The Bishop of Rome will not claim authority over the national states. The Christian Church, Catholic and Protestant, surrendered to them long ago. It says to the national states: "You shall control men's acts, and I will keep their consciences." That divorce is deathly to the life of religion, and the life of man. What reality can there be in that conscience which takes no responsibility for man's acts? How disastrous has been the use made of the great saying of Christ: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's!" Who points out the simple truth that when Christ spoke those words, Cæsar was the sole and omnipotent ruler of the

known world—the *orbis terrarum*; or that he was the keeper of the world's peace; or that it was because of this that Christ enjoined obedience to him, and discouraged national rebellion against him? Who points out that the national governments of to-day—the Führers, the Duces, the democratic Parliaments, the Presidents—are not merely not Cæsars, but the very antithesis of Cæsars? By nature and by definition there can be but one Cæsar—the *imperator mundi*, the keeper of the universal Roman peace. A Cæsar who is not sole emperor of the civilized world, who is not the keeper of the world's peace, is no Cæsar at all. And bewildered mankind will find release and salvation only when it knows that by the death of Cæsar it is absolved from allegiance to Cæsars: and that it has but one way now; to render unto God the things that are God's.

That, I believe, is the answer, and the only answer to the problem of politics in the modern world, which I have narrowed down to the problem of creating in men the immediate and incontrovertible sense of the reality of a super-national authority. The history of the civilization we inherit falls into three periods, divided each from each by dissolution and chaos. There was the peace of Cæsar; there was the peace of the Church; and the third, which is yet to come, will be the peace of God. If it does not come, I believe Christian civilization will perish altogether. For it is no use saying to ourselves: "Let us have the peace of Cæsar again. That is enough." It would be enough, if only we could get it. It would

indeed be enough if the nations would establish a super-national political authority, which could compel peace. But it is precisely by the effort to discover the necessary basis and precondition of such a super-national authority—which (I repeat) must be a power that can compel the citizens of the national state to renounce their national allegiance—that we are driven to the necessity of religion and the inevitability of God. The conclusion is strange, no doubt, to a modern mind. But I am no conjurer. I am entirely serious when I say that the practical problem of establishing a super-national authority is none other than the problem of discovering or re-discovering God. In order to recreate Cæsar, we must rediscover God.

But that is impossible, you will say. And I can only reply that, if it is impossible, then Christian civilization is impossible: and that Shakespeare's vision in *King Lear* is the truth:

If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
It will come
Humanity must perforce prey on itself
Like monsters of the deep.

Or you may say: "How can this have to do with us, men of 1939? We know nothing of religion. Our whole education is secular. That at least we have achieved." To that I reply that the realities of society, national and international, are such that they make mock of the so-called principle that education must be secular. Secular education to-day is not

secular; neither is religious education religious. Religious education that is divorced from secular education is, without knowing it, secular; and secular education that is divorced from religious education is, without knowing it, religious. The grim fact is that secular education, to-day, is, in fact, nationalistic education—and that is education for chaos and death; and the still grimmer fact is that religious education is bound to be nationalistic, too; simply because the nation is the real God whom men in fact adore and obey. Men only pretend to believe in the Christian God to-day; but whether they go to church or remain outside, they believe in a God; they believe in the God who bids them do what the national state commands them to do.

“Man must, and will, have some religion,” said William Blake. Unless we realize the truth of this, I do not believe there is any possibility of understanding the world to-day. And unless we realize the truth of that simple statement, we shall not realize the deeper truth of what he went on to say. “If he has not the religion of Jesus, he will have the religion of Satan, calling the Prince of this world, God, and destroying all who do not worship Satan under the name of God.” That is the condition of the world to-day.

“Man must, and will, have some religion.” That is the first point. Whether or not it calls itself religion, the religion is there in every modern nation—the unconscious religion that is the indispensable condition of the existence of any modern national

state. This condition of unconscious religion has existed in the western world before now; it existed in the Roman Empire, in the world of the universal Roman peace, and gradually it came to consciousness, as the worship of the Emperor: *divus Augustus*. And that religion, which seems to us remote to-day, was once a very real religion, as we should understand in an instant, if by a miracle universal peace were to be enforced upon the world. We, like the peoples of the Roman Empire, should marvel at the mysterious and superhuman power which could grant and maintain this blessing to man. But the unconscious religion of our world, which is nationalism, comes to consciousness with a sense of shame and dismay. When it utters itself, in Germany and Italy, we are horrified, and desperately persuade ourselves that it has nothing to do with us. But it has. Nationalism is our religion, no less than that of Germany. We can gloze it over a little longer; we can still pretend. But not for long now. The real conflict that is preparing in the world is not the conflict between Communism and Fascism (as the Fascists and the Communists say) nor is it the conflict between Christianity and Communism (as General Franco says). Those are both unreal conflicts, behind which the real adversary hides. The real conflict that is preparing is the conflict between Christianity and anti-Christian nationalism; and as that conflict develops, Christianity will be divided into the false and the true.

Anti-Christian nationalism becomes conscious of

its own "religious" nature as Fascism. Hence the demonic strength of Fascism: it is based upon what modern man unconsciously does believe. And the aim of Fascism is to create (as Rome once did) a unity of the world by conquest. But it is impossible. The time for that has long since gone by. Unity by conquest has nothing to bring the world to-day; it is the dream of a mind diseased. If it could be achieved, it would be the unity of a vast desert. There is no possible return to Cæsar save through God. After the great Empire had fallen, and the Roman peace had been shattered, the custody of the mysterious ideal of world-unity passed into the hands of the Christian Church. The mystery and majesty of the dream of Rome, no less than the mystery and majesty of the Blessed Sacrament, made the Roman Pontiffs the powers they were. The mighty religion of Cæsar, who had held the world together and given it peace, was marvellously blended with the religion of Christ—"the world's ransom: Blessed Mary's Son", whose peace was not as the world's. In process of time that spiritual-temporal power which consciously strove to re-establish the unity of the world decayed; and the terrible modern paradox began to be. As the world came nearer and nearer to being a material unity the idea of unity departed from it: above all, the reality of the religion which demands world-unity.

That change, so sinister and so strange, so unfamiliar to the habit of modern thought, is astonishing to the mind which can realize that it did occur.

It is inordinately difficult to realize that there was once a time when religion in the West was the religion of world-unity. The very phrase sounds empty and forlorn to-day—as it were the dying echo of a feeble idealism. To-day it means, if it means anything, that we must try to make a religion of the idea of world-unity. It cannot be done. Yet the idea of world-unity and the cultus of religion, whether Roman or Christian, were inextricably intertwined from the beginning of the Christian era until five hundred years ago. In those five hundred years, world-unity and Christianity have separated from one another completely. And Christianity has died in consequence; and world-unity is world-chaos. Nationalism has devoured the heart of Christianity: only a shell remains.

It is more than strange. The early martyrs of the Christian faith preferred to die rather than to give their pinch of incense to the remote and majestic power which held the world in awe and unity and peace: a beneficent temporal power if ever there was one. Yet to-day when the temporal power demands the sacrifice of humanity itself, it is blessed by the Christian Church. “No God save God,” cried the martyrs, when the State was doing a work almost divine; “No God save the State,” cry the Churches, when the states are committed to the work of the devil.

In order not to obscure the demonstration of what is in fact involved in the establishment of a super-national authority, we have treated nationalism as a

single and constant thing. Yet it is manifest that it is not so. Whereas we may truly say that in the early period of nationalism, it was a concomitant of individualism; it is obvious that nationalism in its distinctive contemporary form is the avowed enemy of individualism. From this, indeed, derives the element of moral strength which totalitarian nationalism undoubtedly possesses, and which is so often disregarded by those brought up in a different nationalistic tradition like ours, in which nationalism is curiously intertwined with "liberal" individualism.

This deceptive combination is (I believe) peculiarly English, and American: its first phase was due to England's isolation from the continent of Europe, its second to the still greater isolation of America. Anglo-Saxon nationalism has depended on sea-power. Continental nationalism, on the contrary, has always had to assert itself by military power. Nationalist military power demands a degree of internal regimentation quite different from that required by nationalist sea-power. The political mentality of members of a nationalist state who take universal military service for granted, is profoundly different—and let us say, frankly, far more realistic—than the mentality of members of a nationalist state who have been spared this obligation. Hence, the extravagance of liberal idealism so characteristic of England and America—an idealism which seldom dreams of paying the price in individual sacrifice of the policies it advocates. Hence such a pitiful gesture as the

overwhelming vote for the League of Nations over Abyssinia, which led to the dismissal of Sir Samuel Hoare—whose retiring speech was one of the most *honest* utterances made by a British statesman since the War—and achieved its appointed end in the complete desertion of Abyssinia, and the defence of it by Lord Halifax, of all men. Hence, too, the unseemly paradox of the advocacy by the Labour Party of a policy of collective security, and an entire refusal by the same party to advocate the military conscription which such a policy demands.

These are signs that the bluff of our peculiar individualist nationalism is being called. Napoleon must be smiling at our pitiful showing to-day: we are being revealed to the world as a nation of shopkeepers indeed. And yet we are not so pitiful as we appear. After all, we could not help our peculiar geographic position; nor could we easily have avoided the peculiar mentality which it has created in us. Compared to the rest of Europe, we have had an easy time; it was hard for us to believe that we did not deserve it. We have not experienced the kind of pressure that makes it necessary to fight for our advances. We did not have to militarize our Protestantism: hence the queer psychological gulf that divides us from the reformed Churches of the Continent. We have not had consciously to solve the tremendous problems raised by the emergence of the modern state: hence our strange poverty in political thinking. We have always had a margin in which to muddle through.

We have not had to regiment our religion. In no other country in Europe has such an individualistic proliferation of sects been possible. In other countries they would have been compelled to organize into unity to make headway against their opponents. England is the European home of luxury religions; and America is their paradise. The development of the Church of England itself has been luxurious: it could retain more of the Catholic tradition than any other reformed Christianity, and evolve with an amplitude which would have been fatal to continental Catholicism. The parish priest in England is still by tradition a "gentleman". The more one contemplates our history, the more certain it is that we have hitherto been an incomparably privileged people, among the nations of Europe.

What we have done with our privilege is another matter. If we go on as we are going now, we shall (as D. H. Lawrence prophesied) "slip greasily into decay". If we cannot rise to the conception that we have a surpassing obligation towards Europe, towards the Christian civilization of Europe, it appears to me certain that our end as a great nation will be speedy and ignominious. What is the nature of Christian civilization in Europe? That, I believe, is the question the conscious Englishman must try to answer. What does the effort to re-establish the authority of God *mean* for an Englishman?

CHAPTER V

SUPERNATIONAL AND SUPERNATURAL

THE political problem of the European world to-day is to establish the authority of God—of the Christian God. But, alas, those words have little meaning in modern ears. They convince the convinced, but whom do they convince besides? And even those who may be abstractly convinced of the necessity of a super-national and religious loyalty in the vital and practical sense I have tried to convey, feel themselves to be far removed from what they know, or believe they know, of the Christian religion. It is indubitably true that many of the finest types of contemporary manhood would feel that they compromised their own integrity by professing the Christian faith.

But it is (I believe) precisely the slow mortification of Christianity by growing cancers of nationalism and its natural ally, capitalism, which has destroyed the vital connection between the Christian Church and the sensitive mind to-day. It is because the profession of Christianity so evidently appears to mean nothing, in the sense that it is devoid of consequence in significant behaviour, that it has come to be intellectually meaningless to those

Y outside the Church. And this apparent nonentity of the Christian faith makes the deepest impression precisely upon those who are brought up as school-boys within it. Christian profession and Christian worship is still the rule in the great majority of our public schools. The crisis comes earlier to-day than it did thirty years ago: at sixteen the boys are already perplexed by the utter discrepancy between their religious profession and the morality that manifestly obtains in the world beyond; and they pass out into a society in which the Christian motive is simply ignored, or explanations given of the grim posture of human affairs that are far more plausible than any that current Christianity dares to offer. Some explanation they must have, if they are serious-minded, of the condition of a world so radically alien to the generous mind of youth. The only adequate one that is offered them is that of Marxist materialism. They have never been prepared for that, in the only way they could be prepared for it—namely, by a Christianity which admitted it was true, so far as it went.

Contrast this position of Christianity in the public school to-day with the place which Arnold of Rugby gave to it in the eighteen-thirties. He quite fearlessly made the teaching of Christianity central to his whole scheme of education. Not only was it the mission of the educated Christian to help to realize the Kingdom of God in society; but Christianity, being centred on the love and worship of Christ, was not only capable of receiving all new knowledge, but

eager to welcome it. Christ's position, so to speak, in the world of reality was unassailable. Let Him be King of a man's heart, and he could fearlessly open wide the gates of his mind to truth of every kind. Had Arnold of Rugby been a headmaster to-day, he would have struggled honestly to expound the doctrines of Marxism; in so far as they are true, he would have taught them, in so far as they are false, he would have exposed their falsity—with the convincing seriousness of the man who "has been there".

Arnold believed, and passionately believed, that Christianity was wholly relevant to the new society of the nineteenth century. It was the only thing, he believed, that could control it. He devoted his life to the effort to create an *élite* of Christian men who would govern it as Christians. But he died young; and instead of the disaster he feared came seventy years of increasing wealth. So that his effort to maintain Christianity in the very forefront of the English struggle for reform—to make the public school the place of training of a Christian "Order"—largely perished with him. But to him as much as any other single man is due the social progress of England during the nineteenth century. He set the leaven of a new spirit working in the new ruling-class.

One might even say that to his Christian inspiration is mainly due the partial illusion that in England since his time it is the secular society of the nation that has set the pace in social improvement.

It is true enough that the Church has not been conspicuous in leading that movement, and if we are to regard as secular all movements that are not visibly inspired by the organized Church, then assuredly the social progress of the century since Arnold was secular in origin. But in fact much of their dynamic was directly derived from Arnold's ruling conception that the true Church in a Christian country like England was co-extensive with civil society. Any man who selflessly served that society was directly ministering to God.

But such inspiration needs incessant purification and renewal; its continuance also depends, as Arnold saw, on the maintenance of Christianity as the vital source of education. His struggle to maintain the profession of Christianity at London University was prophetic. Even to day it is looked upon as fanatical and reactionary; but the premonition on which his solitary and unavailing struggle was based, that if once education and Christianity were allowed to part company, society would be on the road to disaster, begins to look less fantastic than it did. But the separation happened; and to-day the divorce between the Church and society which he feared is deep indeed. There is so little in contemporary Christianity to command a young man's loyalty, or gain his respect. The average of secular morality is at least as high as the average of Christian morality; and the relation is such that we may say, without real injustice, that the chief visible function of the Church is to perpetuate the performance of a beauti-

ful and significant liturgy. That that function is negligible, we should be the last to maintain; but neither can it be admitted for one moment that it is sufficient to justify the Christian Church either to the reason or the imagination.

Yet another function which the Church still partly fulfils is more evident in the country side than in the town; and since the consciousness and the values of our modern society are predominantly urban, this function is easily forgotten. The parish church in the remote rural district is still the focus of the life of the village community. In the church service the inhabitants of the village become conscious of their community; their common worship is their corporate act. And in the cases where the country parson is still mindful of his true relation to the village community as a whole, he is not merely the priest of the church, but the father of his parishioners, their guide, philosopher, and friend.

It is in relation to what remains of the old village-community (which is pitifully little) that the social function of the Church can best be discerned. To get to the root of the matter we have to feel our way back into the past when the village community was a real commune: when it was cut off from the outer world and was practically self-supporting, when individual possession in the modern sense was very rare. Then, out of the tenth part of the yearly increase, the church and the parson were supported. And as the church was much more than a place of worship—a storehouse, a place of safe-keeping, and a

meeting-house: so was the parson much more than a hierophant of the mystery of God. We have a picture of him, by a master, in Chaucer's "povre persoun of a toun"—not, it is hardly necessary to say, of what we now mean by a town, but of the medieval tun: the village-community. Of this little body, the parson was, as it were, the mind and soul, the consciousness and the conscience: as necessary and natural to the village-organism as were the bodies of the villagers themselves. The bond between them was natural and organic. He was sustained, immediately, by their yearly increase, as the brain sustained by the body he was not merely the symbol, but the embodiment of their unity: its incarnation. By his priestly ministration of the Sacraments, their dependence upon the powers of Nature was translated into imaginative terms, and reflected back to them as a knowledge of their dependence upon God. On their birth, their marriage and their death, he set the seal of divine participation. By his ministry, Nature and super-Nature ascended and descended into one another incessantly, like "Goddess small rain".

Religion was natural then (which is a very different thing from natural religion). It was rooted in the evident mystery of life and growth. Something of this richness of a natural mystery still hangs about Christianity in the country-side. In a village I know, it would still be shocking if after harvest the spontaneous urge to give thanks to God for the earth's increase did not find utterance in the offerings and worship

of the harvest-festival, it would still be shocking if the whole village (whether church or chapel) did not unite in the parish church in that simple devotion. But the parson, who is a townsman, does not understand this natural piety of the village. He thinks it shocking that the chapel folk—there is a little chapel as big as a cottage—should expect to come to the parish church on that day, and that the church-going villagers should expect them to come, too. He thinks of the parish church as the church of a sect, because he was nurtured in a great provincial city, where the parish is an artificial creation, and the parish church is merely a rival religious building amid a bunch of coeval competitors: nor was he ever insensibly touched by the universal tradition of Christianity that still lingers on in the older “universities”. He finds the villagers slow, reticent, unapt to religious emotionalism, and unresponsive to his sermons (as I also am). They are not “religious”, in his sense, at all.

And of course they are not. Religion is not a differentiated and specialized emotion in them. It is something which belongs to the continuity of their lives and rises rhythmically to half-conscious expression in the church service on Sunday. The parson is concerned for their “souls”; they are not concerned about their souls at all: but they are instinctively concerned with their dependence on Nature and on God; they are naturally concerned about fair-dealing and simple help to one another. They like the parson to visit them; but they would far rather not

be visited at all than be visited in the spirit in which he visits them—a spirit of implied criticism because they are not interested in what they feel to be a strained and exotic form of piety.

They are right, and he is wrong. He is out of tune, out of rhythm, with the remote country-side; and this discord, of which all his parishioners are uneasily conscious, is significant. Urban religion and country religion are not the same. Religion is still natural in such a village; it is “plain as way to parish church”. Even if I had no conscious religious faith at all, I should still be drawn by a kind of natural compulsion over the fields towards the Sunday-bell. We are a scattered community, and in us arises the rhythmic impulse to draw together and be one: to be silent or vocal in unison, and in both at peace. But when I lived in a great city—which is a long while ago now—it would have demanded a conscious effort on my part to go to church: and what is more significant, an effort against the grain. I am not by nature averse to effort, intellectual or moral; but I have a profound reluctance towards making any effort which does not come natural to me. In the city, I used to be conscious of a discrepancy between the city life-mode, and going to church. There was no connection between them: and on the few occasions when I did go to church in the city, in spite of myself I stood aloof. I was the spectator, not the participant; I was conscious and critical, of the formulae of worship, of my own dubious integrity, of my fellow-worshippers. I felt that I was in a

theatre, rather than in a church; and that I was not prepared to give even that "willing suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith".

But in the country this is changed. No doubt I have changed, too. The fact that, by the end of the War, life in a great city had become utterly intolerable to me had its meaning: though the desire to escape the city was mainly unreasoned and instinctive. To me, the city and the War were unanalysably one single thing. The great city remained the symbol of that mass-hysteria and mass-degradation of which it had been the forcing-house—the hysteria and degradation which had horrified me in modern war, and which had thrust me into a condition of isolation, at once intolerable and unescapable. Very gradually, in the country a sense of community returned to me. I now had real neighbours. And slowly, my religious faith, which had been real, but private and ecstatic, passed out of my consciousness into my being. At the same time my work and my living became continuous: the impatience of the intellectual dissolved away. There ceased to be any essential difference between my work at the desk, at the carpenter's bench, in the garden or the woods; or between my work and my wife's, my maidservant's or my man's. I underwent, in a quiet and unobtrusive way, what I suppose is meant by the return to Nature. It was not a return to God: for to Him, in my own fashion, I had returned long ago; but it was a simple and imperceptible passing from a religion which was in some sense an escape from life,

or the consummation of a pure isolation, to a social religion which was the natural fulfilment both of my living and the life about me. The hectic had left my faith: it was now one with the seed-time and the harvest, nor could I now conceive an Easter that was not in the spring.

Thus I have come to believe that a rebirth of the Christian religion, which is necessary to the life of humanity and the continuity of civilization, involves a rebirth of Life itself. We must return to the simple sources of living. There is, in the last analysis, nothing else for us to do. What other end can life have but the simple living? To live to an end beyond living seems to me now an insanity. But these things are so simple that they are hard to learn and hard to say. "Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening." What richer life can there be than this—a life of direct dependence upon Nature and upon God? Suppose the end of our mechanical development achieved—a vast economy of human labour, and a vast increase of human leisure. What will man do with his leisure? Who, in a society of simple living, really wants leisure? The best and the simplest men I know have little use for leisure, when they are fulfilled in their work.

I do not think it would be possible or desirable to go back on the machine. But what, I think, is absolutely necessary is to establish a mode of simple living, whereby men, advised by all the grim experience of irreligious centuries, may find in themselves,

but not of themselves, the power to control the machine. The only power that can do that, I believe, is the power of religion; by which I, being a European, mean the power of Christianity. But, in the mechanized and urbanized society that is, that source of power cannot easily be tapped. No matter how sincere is the Christianity of a dweller in a great modern city, there is something strained about his religion. After all, it must not be forgotten that Christianity had its origin in a simple pastoral society, and afterwards developed in accordance with the needs of the village-community. Unless it remains rooted in Mother Earth, I believe it suffers a grievous impoverishment. It lacks the power of resistance.

Nor has it, in fact, resisted. We need to ask ourselves the reason why Christianity has succumbed to nationalism. Those who accept the theory of historical materialism as an absolute, will find the cause in the development of the technique of production; and there is an element of truth in this. But when this development is regarded as an autonomous process, insusceptible of further analysis, and independent of the human will, it leads straight to absolute pessimism concerning the future of mankind. It may be true enough that this all-important process of the development of the technique of production has evaded conscious control; and it certainly is true that it is only now, when this unchecked and uncontrolled development threatens mankind with death, that any considerable section of humanity

begins to be aware of what has happened. Now that the monster has become a Hydra, and one completely out of hand, we incline to imagine that, because it never was controlled, there never was a chance of controlling it. If there never was a chance of controlling it in the past, there assuredly never will be in the future. Determinism in regard to the past is despair in regard to the future.

But in fact it is obvious to those who try to make this process of technical development real to their imagination, as a concrete instead of an abstract happening, that moral decisions were continually involved. To take a single instance, the resistance of the Church to usury, which, if it could have persisted, would very effectively have controlled the growth of capitalist and nationalist society, was not necessarily doomed to fail. It depended on the spiritual authority of the Church whether it could enforce its control; and the efficacy of that authority depended on the Church itself. Had the Church been less corruptible, its authority would less easily have been compromised. True, it would be inhuman to demand that the Church should have been absolutely incorruptible; but it is not inhuman to demand that it should have been a great deal less corrupt than it was, or that its effort should have been towards far greater austerity and simplicity. Had this been so, there might have been a profound difference in the economic basis of European history.

That morality and religion *can* govern economic

forces is a truth which must be asserted again and again. If it be not so, there is verily no hope for humanity; and those who dream of the automatic salvation of humanity by the revolutionary proletariat are of all men the most deluded. That human society is not inherently doomed to be an anarchy of individualism is evident from the fact that within the nations there is order and not chaos. To some extent, and by common consent, the implicit anarchy of individualism is controlled. The deadly danger of modern society lies in the fact that the principle of control (if it can be called a principle) is national. Within the national society men have learned by experience that order is the prime necessity of social life; and the vast majority subscribe, whether consciously or not, to the dictum that "any order is better than none". But that is not enough. There must be order between the nations, or the nations cannot endure. And, as we have seen, the only authority that could enforce this order is the authority of Christianity acting directly upon the individual man. But that authority does not exist. It existed once; but it has disappeared. In spite of anything they may say or pretend, the vast majority of men neither acknowledge nor conceive of an authority superior to that of the national state; and, still worse, there is no Christian Church to-day which really claims such an authority.

The necessity of reasserting, not indeed the authority, but the existence of the authority, falls therefore upon the individual man. That is, indeed,

a pitiful condition; and it cannot be denied that the Christian Church is responsible for it. By what seems to sober contemplation almost a miracle, the Church was once invested with the majesty of the Roman Empire, and the mystery of the body and blood of Christ. A dignity so extraordinary could not fail to gather to itself much of the riches of the world. It is computed that one-third of the land of Europe came into the hands of the Church, and such unearthly power to defend its possessions as no ruler ever possessed. It had but to be worthy of that power to retain them for ever. To shake the immense belief of the Middle Ages in the Catholic Church was not the work of a decade of unworthy doing, but of generations of it. The Church betrayed the simple man. It battered on the village-community; instead of protecting, it helped to destroy it. Not content with lands, it gathered benefices; took the villager's tithe and starved the parson; chastised with scorpions where the lay-lord chastised with whips: until it mattered not to the simple man who held the vast possessions of the Church.

The one authority which could have guarded and guided the village-community in its development in the West was the Christian Church. It did not attempt this. And that, as I read history, is the real failure of the Christian Church in the West. It betrayed the simple villager, and so made possible the gradual substitution of the national for the universal God. If the Church had become the protector of the poor, as a landlord setting a pattern of

justice, as the spiritual power within every village using her strength to compel the lay-lords to follow her example, I do not believe her authority could have been shaken. That, I admit, is a speculation: one of the might-have-beens whose chief value is to help us to an understanding of what is. The function of the Church, as I see it, was to guide and control the growth of individualism. That she once had the power to do this is, I think, indubitable; she had in her keeping the imaginative concept—the universal body of Christ, composed of all Christian men—which would have enabled her to make her power effective; and that imaginative concept was presented to the experience of all men as a visible and invisible mystery to which they did obeisance every Sunday. I do not believe that there will ever be a more potent symbol of the eternal truth than that.

But now, alas, the one body of which men are really aware is the body of the nation. That is the unity they know, and feel, and obey. The Christian religion is merely tolerated to-day. If the Church is content to add the dwindled prestige of its supernatural authority to the ordinances of the national state, well and good: it can be treated as a useful ally. As the strain on the national unity increases and nationalism is compelled to become conscious of itself as a quasi-religion, Christianity is compelled (as in Germany) to the ignominious position of an avowedly perfunctory cultus. Where the Church has been more “diplomatic”, it appears as the ally of

extreme nationalism (as in Italy and Spain). But this temporizing will not avail it much longer. It will be evident to men that the Christian Church is allowed to be as super-natural as it likes, provided it makes no claim to be super-national.

Yet super-nationalism is the reality of supernaturalism; just as community is the reality of communion. Nationalism will assuredly kill Christianity. But Christianity will never be killed. It is simply that "all that can be annihilated must be annihilated". Super-naturalism and super-nationalism will be, I believe, reborn together. I think the process is bound to assume many forms, some more desperate and devotional, like the heroic fervour of the Confessional Church in Germany. The one in which I have a natural faith is the effort to recreate the simple village-community acknowledging an immediate dependence upon the visible bounty of God. To me, the fatal curse of modern life is its abstraction. Between men's living and the sources of their life, all the incredible complexity of the modern economic system is interposed; and in consequence man becomes an automaton, understanding neither the consequences of what he does, nor the causes of what he suffers. He lives cut off by a vacuum from both earth and heaven. He has neither root nor flower, but exists with countless millions of his neuter kind in a sort of vast aquarium of technical civilization.

He is a decent fellow. I imagine that the great majority of the inhabitants of any country that has

developed a technical civilization are just the same sort of decent fellows whose unuttered misery so unspeakably depresses me when I enter a great city. For they have been intolerably let down; and somewhere within themselves, vaguely but incontrovertibly, they know it. But what it is that has let them down, that they do not know. And who can tell them? Some say that it is capitalism. That is satisfying to some for a while. It is a nice big abstract word, that gives men something to hate. Yet the haters of capitalism cannot resist a football pool—that abstraction of an abstraction. That means simply that they cannot, and do not, keep it up. The Communists are all capitalists to-day; they belong to the capitalist life-mode, and that is far deeper and more determinant even in themselves than their compact and conscious creed. The Communists are simply those of the victims of this neuter mechanical nationalist age who react by hatred. God knows I do not blame them; but they will assuredly kill the thing they think they love—humanity.

Of course capitalism—so long as it is not tortured into meaning a few thousand sinister blackguards called capitalists—is a significant name for the thing that has let men down. But so is individualism, so is nationalism. The Machine, too, has let men down: so has the Church. So has Reason, so has Science. When you once begin honestly to seek for the things that have let Man down, you find yourself merely enumerating all his advances. For who shall say that nationalism (though I have made it

appear the villain of the piece) is not an advance of a sort? or individualism, or the machine? Or who would not maintain that the Church to-day is far less corrupt than it was even a century ago? The advances are real advances; yet the total situation of civilized mankind is more desperate than it has ever been. And why? The answer is so terribly simple that it cannot be recognized. These manifold advances of mankind were true advances on one condition alone—that with every “advance” mankind became more conscious of its unity and its mutual responsibility, of its “membership one with another”. Without that growing consciousness of unity and mutual responsibility to control and harmonize these “advances”, they became so many spasmodic rushes along a road which leads to universal death.

The great and crucial advance of mankind has consisted in the invention of the power-machine and its application to production. In the hundred and fifty years that have elapsed since the industrial revolution, at a modest estimate, the physical energy at the disposal and control of mankind has been multiplied a thousand times. As it were in a night the comely and graceful and natural body of Man has become gigantic, but there has been no development of moral intelligence to correspond. The body of mankind moves its limbs in the same old way: so that gestures which had a certain animal grace when the strength of Man was proportioned to his intelligence and morality now are the dangerous gestures of a madman. The vast accession of physical power

is in itself neutral: it can be used for creative or destructive ends. If it is not used for creative ends, it will be assuredly used for destructive ones.

The control of this vast energy is in the hands of the "natural" man, the self-assertive man. Individuals and nations insist on using it for their own individual and national advantage: they know no other way. True, it is of the essence of Christian teaching that there is another way; but this modern world has its origin in a profound repudiation of the corruption of the power which claimed to impose a Christian control on the acts of individuals and nations. Once bitten twice shy, is the simple history of men's emancipation from medieval theocracy. And since that time the sphere of the Christian religion has been limited to men's consciences: over their social being and their social acts its authority was not allowed. Because the great Catholic idea, that the Christian faith was the source of all true human order, had been so horribly corrupted, it was entirely repudiated: it passed out of the minds of men. Secular society was autonomous; and the function of Christianity was either, as an established Church, expressly to sanctify the secular state, or as a voluntary and sectarian congregation, to defend its freedom of belief and worship against it. The idea that there should, or could, be a Christian governance of society had become fantastic.

Nevertheless the truth is that its Christian governance is the only possible governance of a society based economically upon power-production—that is to say

the only governance that will not lead inevitably to death and destruction. Only in so far as the natural man, the self-assertive man, is overcome in individuals and in nations, only in so far as the individuals within the nations, and the individual nations in the community of the world, do regard themselves as truly members one of another, can the new vast energies with which Man has been endowed be used for creative purposes. It is the depth of folly, the extremity of insular illusionism, to imagine that this relation of brotherhood between individuals, or between nations, can be established by the operation of the rational intelligence, or by "trusting to human decency". Of all fallacies this secular optimism has been revealed in these days as the grimmest.

Men and nations can be members one of another only in so far as they are fellow-members of Christ. Only by the grace that comes from Him, only in virtue of the power which He gives to our weak humanity, are we able really to overcome our Selves; only in the light of the truth that is radiated from Him are we able to see that men verily are our brothers; only by the judgment which He passes upon us do we know how totally surrendered we are to the appetites of what St. Paul called the Flesh—the self-regarding instincts of the natural and unregenerate man.

Not that I am saint, or fool, enough to dream of the sudden regeneration of the world by Christ. But what I do dare to dream of is that we should realize where we have to begin. The now complete

divorce of education from Christianity, which has been the consequence of the complete divorce of Christianity from the affairs of the world, is a condition which threatens us with entire ruin. The long preoccupation of the Church with its own continuance as an institution, instead of a preoccupation with its mission to evangelize society, has resulted in an entire secularization of the national society. Not to Christianity, but to "politics" do men look for the remedy of their distresses, and look in vain. For what they are really asking for is a Christian society; and they will not get it save from Christian men. Their dream is a Christian dream; which, when they seek to realize it by secular means, turns—to their horror and dismay—to a Satanic tyranny.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIETY

THE political problem of the modern world, we have said, is to re-establish the authority of God—of the Christian God. That is a tremendous undertaking indeed; but it is, in a sense, a simple one. If we once see that this is indeed the only power which can bring order into the modern chaos, we shall at least be spared the bitterness of rushing to the end of one blind alley after another in the vain hope of finding an issue. We shall be delivered from the temptation of looking for some speedy and “practical” solution, and safeguarded from the self-complacence of appealing to other men and other nations to be “reasonable”. We shall know that there are no short cuts to the salvation of the world; and that we have to begin at the beginning, because there is nowhere else where we can begin. “Give me only a foothold,” said Archimedes, “and I will move the cosmos.” Our task is to move a human cosmos, and we shall find no foundation for our feet within it.

It was by considering contemporary education as an objective sociological phenomenon, that we reached

first the realization that the condition of the world was one of moral chaos, and the acknowledgment that the effort to bring order into that chaos depended for strength and efficacy on the restoration of the authority of the Christian God. Now we must turn backward from our conclusion and see how radical is the revolution that is involved in this demand. If the authority of God is really to be restored, it must be set at the very centre of our education. It may be hard, it may be impossible, for many men to believe in the reality and the authority of the Christian God: but for those who do, it becomes an absolute and self-evident necessity that the whole of their intellectual and spiritual and practical life should be built on this foundation.

This simple conception is difficult for the modern mind to grasp. As we have seen, the main tendency in English life for the last three centuries has been towards the separation of religious from secular concerns, until the divorce has become habitual and almost instinctive. The result is that even a determination to restore the authority of God suggests primarily a revival of religious practices and Christian worship. Now, though we hold that such a revival of Christian worship is imperative, because any attempt to restore Christian belief to the centre of our total life will lack stability without it, we also hold that this should be regarded rather as secondary than primary. A new fidelity of Christian worship is rather the inevitable consequence than the originating cause of that revivification of man's total

life by Christian belief, with which we are here concerned.

What we aim at, what we have discerned as the one thing needful, is the regeneration of the life of the nation by Christianity—the reference of that life, both in the individual and in society at large, to the supreme authority of God. To this end our education must be Christian. If education is not Christian, we may be sure that our national life will never be Christian. Possibly, as individuals, we shall come to the realization of the necessity of the Christian faith; but we shall only find ourselves virtually outcast from society, unless its education has become Christian. The effort to restore Christianity to its rightful position as the basis of education is unavoidable, if the concept of a Christian society has any reality.

Perhaps the prior question is whether the concept of a Christian society, or more explicitly, a Christian nation, has any reality. There is a powerful movement of contemporary Christian thought—Lutheran in inspiration—which would maintain that there is an essential heterogeneity between any conceivable organization of the earthly commonwealth and the Kingdom of God. Possibly this emphasis on the divine transcendence may have a value as a protest against the progressive humanism which largely usurped the place and the name of Christianity in the nineteenth century, particularly in the deceptive atmosphere of Anglo-Saxon liberal democracy; but the form of the protest is surely as un-Christian as

the error it condemns. If this doctrine be admitted, then the tendency towards social indifference which has always lurked within Protestantism, is consciously justified: for if the organization of society is by nature delivered over to the dominion of evil, there is nothing for the Christian to do except to withdraw from it, or, by an exercise of casuistry, to give his Christian approval to any existing form of social organization, not because it aspires to be Christian, but merely because any social order is a lesser evil than social anarchy—a social anarchy which Christianity, in this perverted form, is avowedly careless to prevent and impotent to control.

Whether or not this form of Protestant thinking is, as it seems to me, retrograde and pernicious, there can be no doubt that it is alien to the temper of English Christianity, both Anglican and Nonconformist. The finding of an objective judgment would probably be that Anglicanism had tended to err on the side of social indifference, and Nonconformity in the direction of a confusion between Liberal politics and religion: but neither wing of Christian opinion in this country has lacked prophets to declare that the concept of a Christian social order is not merely legitimate but essential in any but a perfunctory Christian faith.

We may appreciate the importance of this strain in Christian thought in England, and its intimate bearing on education, by returning to the convictions of the two men who did more than any others to leaven the educational system of England during the

nineteenth century—Thomas and Matthew Arnold, father and son. The father devoted his life to the reform of an English public school, and thereby shaped the ideal to which public-school education has aspired for the last hundred years; the son in turn devoted his life to the effort to redeem our cheap and nasty system of elementary education and to rouse the English middle-class to the necessity of a worthy system of secondary education. The two Arnolds are not very fashionable to-day; a vulgar scepticism has found easy game in their high seriousness. But to them, as much as to any two men, we owe the tradition of disinterested public service; and they deserve the gratitude which Rome used to feel towards those who did not despair of the *res publica*.

That phrase, the *res publica*, is scarcely translatable into English. The "common-weal", literally understood, comes nearest to it. But the *res publica* means more than that: it contains the assertion that there is a *res publica*; a social and super-individual reality. What distinguished the two Arnolds was that they were exceptionally sensitive for the English *res publica*. Exceptionally, because this in Dr. Arnold's day was a mode of thinking alien to the English mind. In so far as the *res publica* was conceived of as existing, it existed as the appanage of the aristocracy who governed and exploited it. Probably, Coleridge was the first English political thinker who achieved a definite conception of English society as held together by a bond not of

mere interest and convenience, but by the potency of an incarnate and spiritual "idea". In other words, for Coleridge, the national society of England was, essentially, a spiritual society. The pregnant hints of Coleridge's thought fell on good ground in Arnold's mind, and grew into an original theory of English society. It was a Protestant theory, like Coleridge's, in that, like Coleridge's, it was based on the repudiation of the Papal supremacy. For Coleridge and Arnold the assumption by the King of England of the headship of the Church of England was as it were the Magna Charta of a new Christian society. It meant that the Church in England was henceforward identical with the nation. The English nation, regarded under one aspect, was the Christian Church in England; regarded under another aspect, it was the civil society. For Dr. Arnold, the notion that the Church in England consisted of the clergy was entirely retrogressive; so was the belief that the validity of the Church lay in the fact of apostolic succession. Hence his antipathy to what he called Newmanism, and his conviction that if its conduct were to accord with its profession its logical end was Rome. Nor could he allow that the Laudian conception of the Church was valid. That had been challenged and finally overthrown at the cost of a civil war. The attempt to revive it was irresponsible romanticism, unworthy of serious men. However crude and excessive may have been the revolt of the Civil War, the meaning of the upheaval was clear: that henceforward in England the civil

and the religious society were to be conceived as one.

In a letter towards the end of his life, Dr. Arnold distinguished his own liberal attitude from that which passed current under the name of Liberalism. The first great difference between himself and the political Liberals was that they allowed to Benthamite political economy a supremacy which did not belong to it. "I think," said Dr. Arnold, "that the *summum bonum* of their science, and of human life, are not identical . . . economical good is very often made in practice a direct social evil." He then enlarged upon a still more significant difference, in words which contain the essence of his social, political and religious creed.

My second difference is greater by much than this: I look to the full development of the Christian Church in its perfect form, as the Kingdom of God, for the most effective removal of all evil, and promotion of all good; and I can understand no perfect Church or perfect State, without their blending into one in this ultimate form. I believe, further, that our fathers at the Reformation stumbled accidentally, or rather were unconsciously led by God's Providence, to the declaration of the great principle of this system, the doctrine of the King's Supremacy—which is, in fact, no other than an assertion of the Supremacy of the Church or Christian society over the clergy, and a denial of that which I hold to be one of the most mischievous falsehoods ever broached—

that the government of the Christian Church is vested by divine right in the clergy, and that the close corporation of bishops and presbyters—whether one or more, makes no difference—is and ever ought to be the representative of the Christian Church. Holding this doctrine as the very cornerstone of all my political belief, I am equally opposed to Popery, High Churchism, and the claims of the Scotch Presbyteries, on the one hand; and to all the Independents, and advocates of the separation, as they call it, of Church and State, on the other: the first setting up a Priesthood in the place of the Church and the other lowering necessarily the objects of Law and Government, and reducing them to a mere system of police, while they profess to wish to make the Church purer.

These were the principles in accordance with which Dr. Arnold educated his pupils at Rugby. They were educated to be responsible members of a Christian society, grounded in the knowledge that on them it depended whether the society in which their lives were spent and their life-work was done was by their self-dedication to be brought a little nearer to the Kingdom of God. In a society thus conceived, after an education thus conducted, disinterested service of the *res publica* was a dedicated Christian life. It is easy enough to see the dangers of such a conception, and how it might be eventually degraded into the egregious doctrine that big busi-

ness is a form of religious "service"; but such dangers are inseparable from any courageous vindication of the reality of a Christian society. Dr. Arnold was a true Christian citizen, who set himself devotedly to do what he could towards a Christian regeneration of the national society. He gave his life to shaping and inspiring a new generation of men for whom Christianity was a practical inspiration. This was the import of the dream he cherished of reviving the order of Deacons—a veritable Christian "order" in modern society, of men who publicly acknowledged their Christian allegiance and yet pursued their "secular" occupations, which, in virtue of that allegiance and that inspiration, ceased to be "secular".

It is not surprising that Thomas Arnold's influence upon his gifted son was durable. Nothing is more impressive in the letters of Matthew Arnold than the incessant undertone of loyalty and affection to his father. Quite simply, Matthew Arnold revered his father; and as he came more and more clearly to conceive his own life-work, it appeared to him that his mission was to develop his father's convictions, and to carry on, in the conditions of a later age, the work of educational reform to which his father had dedicated his life. As Dr. Arnold had set a new leaven to work in the education of the upper middle-class, so Matthew Arnold endeavoured to further the work of regeneration by labouring as an inspector of elementary schools, and struggling to

awaken the consciousness of the Nonconformist middle-class to the necessity of a worthy system of secondary education. No less than his father, he believed that the basis of the system of national education of which he dreamed, and for which he laboured, must be Christian; but he also believed that the conception of Christianity as religion, and of the Christian society, must be expanded in response to the just demands of a later generation.

Matthew Arnold stood in the relation of creative disciple to his father, faithful to the spirit not the letter of his thought. He regarded his father as a great Christian educator, whose creative influence had been based on his conviction that a Christian was afraid of no new knowledge: who believed, indeed, that in the intellectual and spiritual world, all things work together for good to them that love God. He had been, if not the great religious reformer for whom the age was waiting, his true forerunner. "It is one of the hardest tasks in the world," wrote Matthew Arnold, "to make new intellectual ideas harmonize truly with the religious life." That is the achievement of the great religious reformer.

No such religious reformer for the present age has yet shown himself. Till he appears, the true religious teacher is he who, not yet reconciling all things, at least esteems things still in their due order, and makes his hearers so esteem them; who, shutting his mind against no ideas brought by the spirit of the time, sets these ideas, in the sphere

of the religious life, in their right prominence and still puts that first which is first; who, under the pressure of new thoughts keeps the centre of the religious life where it should be.

Such a religious teacher had his father been in his generation; such also Matthew Arnold (I think quite justly) believed himself to be. In a letter written to his mother at the same time as the foregoing passage, he more closely defines the relation between his father and himself.

I have not (he says to his mother) read Vaughan's sermons; nor do I think it possible for a clergyman to treat these matters satisfactorily. In papa's time, it was; but it is so, it seems to me, no longer; he is the last free speaker of the Church of England clergy who speaks without being shackled, and without being obviously aware that he is so, and that he is in a false position in consequence; and the moment a writer feels this, his power is gone. I may add that, if a clergyman does not feel this now, he ought to feel it. The best of them (Jowett, for example) obviously do feel it, and I am quite sure papa would have felt it, had he been living now, and thirty years younger. Not that he would have been less a Christian, or less zealous for a national Church, but his attention would have been painfully awake to the truth that to profess to see Christianity through the spectacles of a number of second or third-rate men who

lived in Queen Elizabeth's time (and this is what office-holders under the Thirty-Nine Articles do)—men whose works no one dreams of reading for the purpose of edifying and enlightening oneself is an intolerable absurdity, and that it is time to put the formularies of the Church of England on a solider basis.

In saying that Matthew Arnold was quite legitimately developing his father's attitude; he was speaking as the authentic inheritor of his father's spirit. Nor was he in the least forcing the interpretation. Dr. Arnold was, in the finest sense of the phrase, a liberal Christian, a man whose ardent love for Christ was such that it was axiomatic in his mind that a living Christian faith could not be weakened, but only purified and strengthened by the application of a profound historical and literary criticism to the Bible. In fact, Dr. Arnold was a pioneer among English churchmen in his familiarity with contemporary German criticism.

But the main significance of Matthew Arnold's statement is that it shows how completely he had absorbed his father's thought concerning the role of the national Church in a Christian society. But this conception had also to be expanded. It was no longer possible to defend the position of the national Church, as Dr. Arnold had sought to do, by defending the test of subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles. The supremacy of Christianity in education must be maintained by other means; and the institution of

the national Church must be commended to the Christian imagination of men by arguments which touched the essential, or arose (as Coleridge would say) from the "idea". Thus Matthew Arnold wrote in *Culture and Anarchy*:

One may say that to be reared a member of a national Church is in itself a lesson of religious moderation and a help towards culture and harmonious perfection. Instead of battling for his own private forms for expressing the inexpressible and defining the indefinable, a man takes those which have commended themselves to the religious life of his nation; and while he may be sure that within those forms the religious side of his own nature may find its satisfaction, he has leisure and composure to satisfy other sides of his nature as well.

It was not (as will be abundantly evident) that Matthew Arnold fell into the error of conceiving that the religious appetite of man's nature was one among many. He would have agreed with Scott Holland that Christian faith is a condition of the total man, and is the source from which all his faculties are regenerated and nourished. He is concerned to point out the waste of spiritual energy which is involved, at the best, and the deadly danger which is incurred, at the worst, in the effort to establish new sectarian forms and formulae of Christian worship.

But with the member of a nonconforming or self-made religious community, how different! The sectary's *eigene grosse Erfindungen*, as Goethe calls them,—the precious discoveries of himself and his friends for expressing the inexpressible and defining the indefinable in peculiar forms of their own, cannot but, as he has voluntarily chosen them, and is personally responsible for them, fill his whole mind. He is zealous to do battle for them and affirm them; for in affirming them he affirms himself, and that is what we all like. Other sides of his being are thus neglected, because the religious side, always tending in every serious man to predominance over other spiritual sides, is in him made quite absorbing and tyrannous by the condition of self-assertion and challenge which he has chosen for himself. And just what is not essential in religion he comes to mistake for the essential, and a thousand times more readily because he has chosen it for himself, and religious activity he fancies to consist in doing battle for it.

In such fashion did Matthew Arnold defend his father's and his own conviction of the spiritual significance of the liturgy of the national Church, as the means by which the religious nature of man was saved from wasting its strength on unessentials. By a like harmonious development was expanded his father's belief in the ideal identity of the Church with the nation,—to be realized in the Christian

national society, committed by institution and profession to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. As Dr. Arnold, following Coleridge, had asserted the positive "idea" of the English Reformation, so Matthew Arnold, likewise in accord with Coleridge, criticized the negative defects of the Protestant and Puritan impulse in England: a spirit of individualism which tended to become anti-social, and an exclusive emphasis on a particular form of religious experience, which tended to set a gulf between Christianity and humane learning. The consequence was an inadequate understanding of the nature of society among the preponderantly Non-conformist middle-class, and an ill-informed hostility to positive state-action, which played disastrously into the hands of the aristocracy. The aristocracy, and the professional classes associated with it, monopolized the good schools; but the new middle-class, owing to its religious narrowness, did not recognize the need of a liberal education, and, owing to its traditional suspicion of state-action, would not sanction the only possible means of supplying it with the education it lacked.

Accordingly, Matthew Arnold's effort was to awaken, if he could, the new middle-class to a sense of its own cultural deficiencies, and to break down its attitude of mistrust towards state-action for providing secondary education. Thus he constantly appeals to English Liberalism to abandon its now obsolete hostility towards the state, and to recognize the profound difference between the position of the

new middle-class and the aristocracy. The aristocracy could and did oppose the provision of liberal education by the state, because it would put an end to their educational monopoly and the political superiority based upon it; by ignorantly following their lead, the middle-class merely perpetuated its own cultural and political inferiority. They must cease to regard the state negatively and crudely as the enemy of individual liberty; they must submit their traditional fetish of liberty to enlightened criticism. Liberty did not consist in thinking or doing as one liked, but in thinking truth and doing what was good. The attitude towards the state which they had inherited, and which was based on an imperfect conception of liberty, was now become anarchical, and utterly inadequate to the needs of the new society of industrialism.

What was now required was a new conception of the state as representing the better and more permanent selves of the members of the national society. There is no evidence that Matthew Arnold derived this doctrine directly from Rousseau (who first promulgated it in the *Contrat Social*); it appears to have come to him rather in the course of his practical investigations into the French educational system. That had led him, as early as 1860, to a much juster appreciation of Napoleon as a social architect than was prevalent then, or is prevalent to-day. Henceforward his ruling idea, reached as Rousseau had reached it before him, as the conclusion of an inquiry into the function of education in

society, was that until the state was conceived by the members of a democratic society as the positive instrument of spiritual culture, a "self-governing democracy" was an empty phrase.

This was the form into which Dr. Arnold's conception of the ideal identity of the nation and the Church developed in Matthew Arnold's mind. We have seen that it was partly realized by the new conception of the duty of disinterested service to the state, as the duty of a Christian in an avowedly Christian society, which Dr. Arnold inculcated. It may seem that in the new form, by which the state was conceived as representing the higher selves of the members of society, the Christian emphasis was dissolved away; and that Matthew Arnold had unwittingly succumbed to a form of that deification of the secular state which is open and avowed in Europe to-day, and is the grim evidence that we are at a crisis in the history of Christendom.

On the contrary, in Matthew Arnold's view, the validity of this new and necessary conception of the state entirely depended upon the conception of the nation as a Christian society. Once separate the belief in the state as the representative of the higher selves of its members from the governing conception of the national society as a form of the Christian Church, and it instantly became pernicious. Only in a national society which was conceived and comprehended as a body of Christians, and in which citizenship and Christian belief were inseparable in idea, could the notion of the spiritual

supremacy of the state be salutary and not disastrous. On the one hand, in a modern industrial society, based on machine-production and extreme interdependence, the doctrine that the state represented the more permanent self of the citizens was necessary to the mere physical existence of society: for without that acknowledgment material anarchy would prevail within it. On the other hand, the only condition on which such a doctrine could be embraced without disaster, or could be *believed* in by an enlightened mind, was that the society in which the state was thus regarded must be a society of Christian men. Thus, for Matthew Arnold, the doctrine of the state which was necessary if a modern society was to be saved from anarchy, was inseparable from a true doctrine of the Christian religion, and the acceptance of that doctrine by the members of the society.

Hence it was that, in the single-minded pursuit of his aim to provide the coming democracy with a worthy system of education by the only possible means—the action of the state—Matthew Arnold was inevitably drawn more and more into religious criticism. He became more and more convinced of the intimate connection between the Protestant distortion of the Pauline doctrine of regeneration and the anarchical bias of individualistic “liberalism”—then in fact common to all parties in England. He saw in the sharper detail of the day-to-day struggle for education what Coleridge had glimpsed before him: that the narrow Puritan and Protestant preoccupation with “salvation” had had the

dangerous effect of giving a derived religious sanction to the desires and activities of the ordinary self, throughout the ordinary affairs of "this world". Since Coleridge's day, and his father's, the progress of the industrial revolution had incredibly increased the extent and complexity of "this world". The concentration of spiritual energy in business enterprise consequent on the Puritan segregation of religion from the general context of life, which had been relatively harmless before the industrial revolution, was actively pernicious now that the new methods of production had opened up a vast new world of conduct, which was no longer roughly controlled by natural necessity, and in which the conventional conceptions of "sin" had no application at all. A new man had emerged, a new middle-class man, the greater part of whose real conduct escaped even the nominal surveillance of Christian morality. It was a social and psychological continent, as it were, but newly discovered, wherein conventional Christianity had no guidance to give. To conduct within this new and neutral territory Christian principles as they were currently understood, whether by conformity or nonconformity, were irrelevant.

Only by this approach can the true import of the new "synthesis between Hebraism and Hellenism", for which Matthew Arnold strove, be fully understood or the nature of the difficulties which he encountered in trying to propound it. He was compelled by his own experience gained in his indefatig-

able work to elevate the general conception of education, and by his disinterested examination into the nature of the resistance to those efforts, to acknowledge that the chief enemy was a Christianity which had become perverted into an instrument for sanctifying the activities of the ordinary self in the new world of industrialism and democracy. In this situation no mere revival of Christian piety could possibly avail: not even a rebirth of Christian saintliness (such as he admired in Newman) could be efficacious against it. What was required was a renovation of Christian understanding, an enlarged conception of the spiritual life itself. In *St. Paul and Protestantism* he approaches his goal by way of an attempt to separate out the eternal essence of the Pauline doctrine from Lutheran and Calvinist rigidities.

The object of this treatise (says Arnold) is not religious edification, but the true criticism of a great and misunderstood author. Yet it is impossible to be in the presence of this Pauline conception of faith (as "dying with Christ") without remarking on the incomparable power of edification which it contains. It is indeed a crowning evidence of that piercing practical and religious sense which we have attributed to Paul. It is at once mystical and rational; and it enlists in its service the best forces of both worlds—the world of reason and duty has an excellent clue to action, but wants motive-power; the world of sympathy

and emotion has an irresistible force of motive-power, but wants a clue for directing its exertion. The danger of the one world is weariness in well-doing; the danger of the other is sterile raptures and immoral fanaticism.

In this interpretation of Paul, Matthew Arnold found the pattern of the new catholic Christianity which he had come to believe the *unum necessarium*. The death to the ordinary self, which could be achieved only through love of Christ, was a continuous act in the disciple of Christ and Paul. It was not only continuous, but comprehensive also: it involved an incessant re-examination in the spirit of selfless Christian love, of all one's traditional habits of behaviour—the old “law” that was for ever reasserting itself—in the twin worlds of action and thought. The most searching intellectual criticism of himself by the individual, and of itself by society, was palpably required by this Pauline discipline if it was to be a discipline and a regeneration of the total man and a means to life in a Christian society. The readiness to submit to the consuming power of “sweetness and light”—the phrase now gains its full meaning—men's stock notions of the good and true: the willingness to purge by the free play of the disinterested intelligence

the barren optimistic sophistries
Of comfortable moles, whom what they think and do
Teaches the limit of the just and true—

this Matthew Arnold held to belong to the essence of Christianity itself as manifest in Christ and experienced and taught by Paul. It was not that some artificial synthesis had to be contrived: the ever-living pattern of the new understanding was already there, in the heart of historical Christianity itself.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRISTIANITY

As Matthew Arnold looked upon England in 1860, it was divided into the aristocracy and the professional classes, who monopolized the best education; the new and mainly Nonconformist middle-class, shabbily educated; and the working-class, who were not educated at all. The aristocracy still ruled, but he saw that it was inevitable that their rule should give way to that of the new middle-class; and his particular effort was to persuade the new middle-class to educate itself for real political power. The political displacement which he foresaw was completely accomplished by the end of the nineteenth century: the Liberal government in office at the beginning of the Great War marked the accomplished fact: in it we may say that Sir Edward Grey represented the aristocracy, Mr. Asquith the new middle-class educated in the old tradition, and Mr. Lloyd George the new middle-class educated otherwise. The fearful situation of Europe to-day is in part the consequence of Mr. Lloyd George's inadequate education. He represents the danger which Matthew Arnold foresaw and against which he tried to forewarn the nation.

Then came, as Matthew Arnold foresaw, the turn of the working-class, and, as he foresaw, it was paralysed by its lack of education for political power. To use his language, the working-class, as a political power, largely adopted the Philistinism of the middle-class before it. It professed indeed a nominal adherence to a new system of ideas—Socialist and international; but the allegiance was merely formal and abstract. The new political influence of the working-class did, however, bring into practical currency one idea which Matthew Arnold had sought to inculcate—the idea of the necessity of state-action in provinces where to the Conservative and Liberal mentality alike it had been anathema. But precisely in the province of education it shrank from radical reform. Perhaps, indeed, it was well that it did; because the purely utilitarian conception of state-action which it held would have destroyed what was humane in the old system without replacing it by anything as good. But the result of this continuous failure of radical and working-class democracy to esteem things in their due order, and to realize that a reform of education was more important than any immediate and “practical” measure, was the stultification of the political power of the working-class. When its moment came, it had no leaders trained and habituated to independence of thought. Such independence of thought as it could boast was based on a crude adoption of Marxist dogmas, which were quickly discarded under stress of a brief political responsibility. It beat a hasty retreat onto the accepted

heritage of middle-class "liberal" ideas.

More than ever, England is living on the dry bones of outworn ideas. Its acceptance of state-action, solely as a channel of personal advantage, without any philosophic or religious conception of the state, as representative of the higher selves of men, to which duties are primarily owed, has left the moral initiative in Europe to the new totalitarian nations. These, at least, arouse within their citizens a quasi-religious enthusiasm, to which England has nothing of the same order to oppose. To arouse a kindred enthusiasm for the national state in this country is hardly possible, and undesirable if it were possible: for manifestly the further exacerbation of exclusive and aggressive national sentiment will precipitate European chaos. Our only hope is to become representative of a higher and truer religious idea. What that religious idea ought to be is sufficiently indicated by the anti-Christian nature of the totalitarian states. But how the English nation can represent the Christian idea is by no means immediately apparent.

Yet it is evident that the spiritual struggle which is now being waged in Europe is a life-and-death struggle of the Christian idea as the vital principle of a civilization. In its simplest form that idea is that the overriding allegiance of man is to God as revealed in Christ—and that this allegiance is not clean outside the texture of men's daily lives, but enters into them at every point and gives them meaning. That idea is decisively repudiated by the

totalitarian states; but it is not decisively asserted by the democratic societies, which, though in fact they are based upon an attenuated form of the Christian idea, and historically had their origin in an assertion of that idea, have become unconscious of their own derivation, and unmindful of the source from which alone their strength can be renewed. The real task of to-day is to help English democracy to become conscious of its own Christian derivation, to separate out the elements of good and bad in the unholy confusion of secular liberty and Christian freedom, to revise completely and in the most drastic fashion our conceptions of Christian conduct, and entirely to renew our practice of Christian thinking. Of this coming necessity Matthew Arnold was aware. Naturally he was not aware of it in all the urgency with which it now presents itself to us: but of the nature of the problem which the new industrial and mechanized society must inevitably set to mankind he was acutely conscious. What was demanded of man by the new age was a new and revolutionary enlargement of the whole scope and habit of Christian thinking.

Ideally speaking, it was the mission of the working-class, considered as a new political power, to be the class by whose advancing movement this enlarged habit of thought should have been brought to bear upon society; because the advent of the working-class to political power marked the completion of the pattern of political democracy. With the introduction of the universal franchise the Christian

idea of the potential equality of men in the sight of God attained practical expression in society. It was at this moment of paramount importance that the members of the new society should be educated to their new responsibilities as members of a Christian society; and, above all, that this new education should be based on a deep consideration of the ends of society and the ends of man in society. This was the moment when a complete renewal of the whole conception of education was called for. Obviously it was unreasonable to demand this of the working-class itself, for they had had no opportunities of acquiring this conception of education; but the conception should have been prepared for them by those who were conscious that the admission of the working-class as free and equal members of the body politic was a revolutionary event in the religious and social life of the nation. Suddenly, by the completion of the machinery of democracy, it had become formally as well as ideally true of every adult member of society that "we are all members of one body". This relation was entirely new; it was the final passing of the English people from minority to manhood, from irresponsibility to responsibility. So profound a change was it that it can be truly described only in Christian terms: it represented the passing of the whole of society into a condition of "consciousness of sin" and of the necessity of redemption. Society had now become a moral and spiritual person, composed of millions of moral and spiritual persons.

So understood—and if complete democracy is not so understood it is surely the most irrational and absurd of all political systems—the advent of universal suffrage, which was foreseen by everyone capable of foreseeing anything at all, peremptorily required to be met by the preparation of a philosophy that was adequate to it. There were two possibilities—the first, a conservative philosophy which believed and plainly declared that complete democracy was an irrational and absurd system of government, and resisted its advent with all its power of enlightenment. But such a philosophy was inconceivable in England save as an academic curiosity: for the only basis for such a philosophy was a revival of the high-flying doctrine of “the divine right of Kings”. That was an irresponsible romanticism: for the English political and religious system in which the “high-flyers” participated was evidently based on “the divine right of Parliament”. The other possibility was a genuine democratic philosophy, which really held that it was a good, a self-evident good, that every adult member of a political society should share in political power. The only solid basis for such a conviction is not merely religious, but specifically Christian; and a very definite kind of Christianity—one which declares plainly that it is involved in the notion of the divine potentiality of all human souls that this divine potentiality should have the opportunity of proving itself in things political. For such a Christianity the Kingdom of God is essentially a paradigm

or pattern of what the temporal community must strive to be.

For the great majority of English people, democracy is simply a habit: it is the English "system" of government; it has worked well enough in the past, and will go on working well enough in the future. But this complacency is childish. English democracy has totally changed its nature in the last seventy years: one might almost say that, if the English political system in 1870 was democracy, then the English political system in 1939 is not. Contemporary mass-democracy is entirely different from the veiled oligarchy of 1870, in which the great middle-class only remotely participated. What is required is a philosophy which can justify our modern mass-democracy not as a passive habit, nor by an irrelevant appeal to the "success"—which is surely doubtful as fact—of a very different political system which prevailed sixty or seventy years ago.

Moreover, it is obvious that a specifically Christian philosophy which can justify mass-democracy, cannot possibly justify mass-democracy in whatever it does. It can justify it only as an experiment, and indicate the necessary conditions which must be fulfilled if the experiment is to succeed. The first of these is that the members of the new democracy should be conscious of their new responsibility, the second that they should be capable of exercising it. That is to say, the members of a democracy must be educated,—not simply trained for some particular

economic function but genuinely educated into a sense of their new responsibility, as fellow-rulers and fellow-members of a new kind of society. They must be educated into a capacity for deciding what is the purpose of man's existence in society. Such an education was what Matthew Arnold meant by "culture"; and these are the reasons why he believed that the one task to which he could usefully dedicate himself was the propagation of "culture" against the inevitable advent of mass-democracy.

We will not stickle for a name, and the name of culture one might easily give up, if only those who decry the more frivolous and pedantic sort of culture, but wish at bottom for the same things as we do, would be careful on their part, not, in disparaging and discrediting the false culture, to unwittingly disparage and discredit, among a people with little natural reverence for it, the true also. But what we are concerned for is the thing, not the name; and the thing, call it by what name we will, is simply the enabling ourselves, by getting to know, whether through reading, or observing or thinking, the best that can at present be known in the world, to come as near as we can to the firm intelligible law of things, and thus to get a basis for a less confused action and a more complete perfection than we have at present.

The indispensable condition of this "culture"—

adequate to the coming democracy and capable of dealing fearlessly with the problems which would beset it—was a combination of the two tendencies of the human spirit which he distinguished as Hebraism and Hellenism—strictness of conscience, and spontaneity of consciousness. These two tendencies, as Arnold read the history of the West, had hitherto alternated with one another in a continuous dialectic. At the Renaissance, Hellenism had re-awakened, and Hebraism once more had been revived to redress the balance. That revival of Hebraism, primarily in the form of English Puritanism, had called forth an immense development of energy, but now it had become retrogressive and had ceased to inform and guide the main stream of human life. The moment had come for a revival of Hellenism—but now, necessarily, of a Hellenism conscious of its own incapacity to exist fruitfully and live worthily apart from Hebraism. Now, for the first time, there must be a conscious effort harmoniously to combine Hellenism and Hebraism in a single religious philosophy which would be the foundation of the new culture.

The central point of this fusion, the spark of incandescence whereby the true chemical combination would be accomplished was to be found, Arnold believed, in a new penetration of the Pauline doctrine of resurrection. This is the theme and purpose of his *St. Paul and Protestantism*; but the substance of that book, it is important to remember, had already been outlined in *Culture and Anarchy*. It is an

essential strategy in the defence of culture against anarchy that Arnold seeks first to rescue the true Pauline teaching from the "grotesque caricature" of it by Puritanism, and the distortion of it "by the whole religious world".

The whole religious world, one may say, use now the word *resurrection* . . . in one sense only. They use it to mean a rising again after the physical death of the body. Now it is quite true that St. Paul speaks of resurrection in this sense, that he tries to describe and explain it, and that he condemns those who doubt and deny it. But it is true, also, that in nine cases out of ten where St. Paul thinks and speaks of resurrection, he thinks and speaks of it in a sense different from this—in the sense of a rising to a new life before the physical death of the body, and not after it. The idea on which we have already touched, the profound idea of being baptized into the death of the great exemplar of self-devotion and self-annulment, of repeating in our person, by virtue of identification with our exemplar, his course of self-devotion and self-annulment, and of thus coming, within the limits of our present life, to a new life, in which, as in the death going before it, we are identified with our exemplar—this is the fruitful and original conception of being *risen with Christ* which possesses the mind of St. Paul, and this is the central point round which, with such incomparable emotion and eloquence,

all his teaching moves. For him, the life after our physical death is really in the main but a consequence and continuation of the new life thus originated on this side of the grave. This grand Pauline doctrine of Christian resurrection is worthily rehearsed in one of the noblest collects of the Prayer Book, and is destined, no doubt, to fill a more and more important place in the Christianity of the future. (*Culture and Anarchy*, p. 153.)

On the re-emergence of what he believed the true Pauline doctrine of Christian regeneration Matthew Arnold's hopes for the future of civilization in England, and ultimately of European civilization, were fixed. It would be, he believed, the first beginning of a new movement towards Christian unity. The narrowness of nineteenth-century Nonconformity, which had ended, in his view, by so separating the religious from the total man that religion was hardly more than a means for sanctifying the activities of the "ordinary self" of the man of business, would necessarily be enlarged, when it became manifest that its fundamental doctrines were a perversion, almost a caricature, of the great doctrine of Paul himself. In so far as Nonconformity entered into the heritage of the true Pauline teaching, it would naturally seek reunion with the Church of England: for in the Pauline self-annulment the element of self-assertion latent in Nonconformist separatism would be revealed as the lawless working of "the natural man".

This, in turn, would bring with it a cessation of the waste and degradation of spiritual energy involved in the stubborn maintenance of separatism. Consequently, the spiritual energy would find its proper employment in a great renaissance of Christian thinking, now able, through its own central security, its own domestic tolerance, to turn itself fearlessly towards the real problems of society, in the same spirit of self-devotion and self-annulment. It was this release of a new energy of specifically Christian thought, prepared and eager, as part of its own Christian discipline, to see things as they are and society as it is, which would achieve the new fusion of Hebraism and Hellenism in the Church of the future.

The doctrine of Paul will rise out of the tomb where for centuries it has lain covered; it will edify the Church of the future; it will have the consent of happier generations, the applause of less superstitious ages.

Above all else, the Church thus edified anew by the same means that it had been edified in the beginning, and edified again at the Reformation, would be the appointed instrument of educating the new society of mass-democracy which had been created in the main by Christian and Pauline influences in earlier forms.

Such was Matthew Arnold's dream. It was a dream of the vivification of the formal democratic

and equalitarian framework of a Christian commonwealth by the authentic spirit of the Christian religion—a religion of incessant regeneration by a continual dying to the ordinary self of lawless appetite and uncriticized desire. In such a democratic Christian commonwealth the nation would be, as Dr. Arnold had demanded, coextensive with the Church; and the narrow conception of the ecclesiastical Church would be expanded to correspond with what Coleridge had discerned to be its true “idea”—the “clerisy” within the national society whose primary function was the education of the citizens of the commonwealth into a knowledge of their obligations and privileges as members of a Christian community. On the realization of that dream, on the acceptance of that doctrine, I believe, the validity of democracy depends.

Another and more seemingly simple doctrine was to occupy the field. This doctrine was, in a sense, antipodal to Matthew Arnold's, for whereas the central problem for Arnold was to educate the citizens of the new democracy to a sense of their responsibilities, and into a knowledge of the nature of the Christian commonwealth, which the new democracy must become, or it would perish—the simpler doctrine of Marxist Socialism appeared to declare that this problem, so far from being crucial, did not and could not exist. The development of the forces of production, the elaboration of the technique of subsistence, it said, determined and governed political and social evolution. Those with-

out whom the productive machinery of the new industrial society could not function were bound to control society. The working-class was destined to rule, and it was bound to rule well, because it could not rule ill. The only education it needed was education into the understanding of its own glorious and inevitable destiny.

That is something of a caricature of Marxist Socialism as Marx originally conceived it; but it is a fairly adequate account of that portion of his doctrine which has been generally received in his name. The first thing to be said about it is that it obliterates the distinction between good and evil. The political triumph of the working-class is good, not because, or in so far as, it *is* good, but because it is inevitable. Its inevitability arises from the enforced correspondence of the social order to the necessities of the technique of production—that technique being paradoxically regarded as the rightful determinant of the quality and nature of man's human relations. The attempt is made to justify this dissipation of the moral judgment into the economic process of history by the theory that all belief in an absolute standard of good is merely an "ideological" compensation for material dissatisfactions.

The idea of the absolute becomes the expression of an ultimate need for security. The thought of God as Father is the symbolic projection of the authoritative tendencies in society, in the

family and in individual life. The struggle for inner peace becomes the sign of a need of escape from historical conditions which do not give peace. (Paul Tillich: *The Attack of Dialectical Materialism.*)

The concealed assumption is that a condition of earthly existence is possible in which humanity shall be *absolutely* happy. If this were true, humanity would cease to be human. Fortunately, it is not true; and indeed it has no meaning. This theory of "ideology", salutary enough as a critical corrective of the incessant tendency of organized Christianity to falsify its pattern of absolute good by adapting it to the service of the powers of "this world"—for example, in preaching submissiveness as the chief Christian duty of the exploited and oppressed—is fatal to all creative spiritual effort, indeed to all thought, when posited as an absolute truth.

Marxism is not an independent philosophy; as philosophy it is parasitic on a prior philosophy of religion and history—namely, the Hegelian—and is incapable of independent life. Concealed within it are all the Hegelian assumptions: the chief of these being the assumption that history is a developing and meaningful process. The conception that history works towards a consummation is a Christian conception; but it is essential to Christian thought that the consummation is not achieved *in* history. But at certain moments the current bias of Chris-

tian thought is such that the development of the conception of historical process which is implicit in the Bible is completely checked. The divine working is so narrowly conceived that it becomes misleading to use the phrase. So Marx speaks of "the movement of history as a whole"; so Matthew Arnold continually employs the notion of the *Zeitgeist*, either using the German word itself or translating it, as in the passage we have quoted on the work of a great religious reformer. There he says that the new intellectual ideas, which it is one of the hardest tasks in the world to harmonize truly with the religious life, "are in the world; they came originally from the world of pure thought; they are put into circulation by *the spirit of the time*".

Those who puff Marxism up into an independent philosophy would dismiss with contempt the notion that seminal ideas "come originally from the world of pure thought". Nonsense! they will say; such ideas are generated by the economic process of society. And as for "the spirit of the time", the *Zeitgeist*, it is a mere phantasma. "Jacobinism loves a Rabbi," said Arnold. He was not thinking of Marx, whose name, in the sixties, would probably have been unknown to him; but it is noteworthy that Arnold should have singled out for criticism precisely that characteristic of modern Jacobinism which is most striking. For the Marxist, the Rabbi has spoken; and it is a matter of faith that seminal ideas are generated by the economic

life-process of society. *How* are they thus generated? What is, or could be, this mysterious process of idea-generation? What does the statement mean? Questions such as these are impertinent and subversive. The Rabbi has spoken: it *is* so.

Poor Marx! It is hard indeed that one who had in him the makings of a great philosopher, but had not time to cultivate his gift, should be thus tortured into nonsense. Marx was too occupied in interpreting history and analysing capitalist society to develop a philosophy; and so he has been saddled with such a crudity as Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. But he would not have had much difficulty in recognizing that Arnold's statement that "seminal ideas come originally from the world of pure thought" and his own doctrine of historical materialism (if it is not pressed to absurdity) do not, and cannot conflict with one another. An idea, in order to be an idea at all, must be apprehended by a mind. Society's consciousness of itself is, and always must be, generically different from society. It is true, and salutary to realize, that my consciousness of myself, of my history and my actions, can be subsumed under my "behaviour" in a large and comprehensive vision of myself. Not only my outward acts, but my desires and my impulses, my thoughts and my beliefs, are indeed, in this simple view, part of my total "behaviour". But by this simplification my thoughts and beliefs cannot be reduced to the category of what men ordinarily understand by act and behaviour; while, in the contrary

direction, by the effort to comprehend (after the manner of Spinoza) my thoughts, my desires and my actions within a single unity, I am steadily impelled towards the recognition, and the experience, of a realm of pure spirit, wherein I participate by the very act of comprehending my thoughts and desires together with my acts in the unity of my total "behaviour". Something remains, and ever must remain, beyond and outside the unity, no matter how comprehensive I may make it: namely, the activity of thought which thus contemplates the total inclusion of the thoughts, beliefs, and acts of a particular man, or a particular society, within the realm of "behaviour". The deeper and more disinterested our self-knowledge, the more we learn to include within our concept of the Self, the more inevitably are we raised to a realm of the intellectual imagination wherein "we in our Selves are nothing"—the realm of pure spirit, and the *amor intellectualis dei*.

The notion that, by any effort of self-knowledge on the part of man, or man-in-society, we can annihilate Spirit from the world of Matter or Life or History, is a madness. The true consequence of all such efforts at disinterested self-knowledge is the gradual purification of the human mind of all its personal impediments and impurities until it momentarily participates in the eternal world of the pure Spirit—the divine Logos, whence all new and true ideas have indeed their being. For it belongs to the essential nature of a new and true idea that it is achieved, or enter-

tained, only by virtue of an act of self-transcendence, or self-annulment. It is not ours, it takes possession of us; before we were, it was. And the adhesion to new and true ideas involves always a sacrifice of ideas that were "natural" to us, ideas with which our Selves had been identified, ideas which made for our own comfort and complacency in this world. By this sign we recognize the advent of a new and true idea; that it is, as von Hügel used to say, "costing".

When our ideas cease to be "costing" to us, then we may know that they are no longer new or true: they no longer proceed from the divine Logos. That is one aspect of the eternal meaning, the inexhaustible significance, of the central affirmation of the Christian faith: that the Word became Flesh in Jesus Christ. In Him was manifest, at a point of time which became eternity, the nature of the divine Logos. It costs Man's all. It cost the all of God. And that is always being forgotten, and always being remembered, by the Christian mind. The remembering is always attended with pain—necessarily, because the remembering begins only when our ideas and our actions begin to be "costing" again, that is, when we apprehend with a new urgency and immediacy the significance of the Cross, when we begin to realize that it is our life, and the law of our life—the law of all our living thought and all our living act. "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life."

If this truth were accepted, the Christian mystery and the Christian faith would immediately become

the living centre of the intellectual and spiritual life of those who embraced it. Christian thinking would no longer be as it were tacked on to a secular and mechanical world-view. It would be recognized, and felt, that Christian experience was at the heart of *all* creative thinking of reality; and the emphasis of faith would lie less in an acceptance of certain profound but intellectually incomprehensible definitions of the divine nature than in a continual experience of the working of the nature that is defined in them. There is in this conception nothing new; it is no more than a natural development of such a conception of faith as was expressed by men like Westcott or Scott Holland:

Faith then is not only the recognition by man of the secret source of his being, but is itself, also, the condition under which the powers which issue from that source make their arrival within him. . . . Not only is the unconscious human nature held by attachment to the Father who feeds it with hidden succours, but faith is, in itself, the power by which the conscious life attaches itself to God, *it is an apprehensive motion of the living spirit by which it intensifies its touch upon God.*

This process of faith is at the heart of the mental process by which we comprehend the movement of reality, and by which we "get at the truth and keep with it", to use Arnold's simple and pregnant phrase. In order "to keep with the truth", we must

die many deaths; and we die them gladly when we understand that the Word was made Flesh in Jesus. In Him was manifest the nature of the thought that created and sustains the universe.

So we may at least dream of a Christianity which shall advance and occupy the centre of the whole vast field of knowledge to-day, because it has prepared itself to do so. The advance and the preparation are a single process. And in so far as Christianity is willing to recognize as its own the radical criticism of man—the unrecognized man who is substantial with the new industrial society, the lawless man who is the creature of the fearful autonomy of capitalism—which Marxism has to offer, so far it becomes immediately capable of advancing and occupying the position which Marxism holds in the minds of men to-day. But a Christianity which, dominated in fact by fear, dismisses the Marxist insight as mere “materialism” will only alienate imaginative youth and leave it eventually a prey to secular nationalism and totalitarianism, into which an anti-Christian socialism must finally be transformed, and which a timorous Christianity will be compelled to sanctify.

The constant and unremitting surrender of those ideas with which our natural selves are identified, the determination to “try all things” at the deliberate cost of our own complacency and comfort—this is surely the “note” of the Christian life in all times and places. If this be so, the magnitude of the failure of Christianity to-day is the measure of

its opportunity. For even though, even because, Christianity has forgotten it, it holds the only key to the world's intellectual and spiritual and material problems to-day. The Christian Church, in so far as the spirit of Christ lives in it, is prepared to accept ideas that may cost it its all. It cannot but be prepared for such ideas, at least in the persons of those for whom Christ is indeed the law of their thinking and their being. But Christianity is not only prepared to submit to these ideas; it is equally prepared not to capitulate to them, as those who submit to them in another spirit than that of Christ are finally compelled to do. A Christian is prepared to submit to an idea which may cost him his all; but one thing he knows it must not cost him—a final denial of Christian love. The very love which prepares him to submit to the costing idea, forbids him to sacrifice love as part of the cost. He tries all things; he holds fast to that which is good. He surrenders all things, but he cannot surrender the love which made him willing to surrender.

I believe that only Christian thinking—in the sense I have tried to indicate—is capable of thinking the crisis of history to-day. If we try to think the human situation at this moment fearlessly and selflessly, “making the mind a thoroughfare for all thoughts: not a select party”, with an inevitability that is absolute we are compelled to think as Christians. We are compelled, in the act of thinking the truth about man in society to-day, to lose our life

to save it; we are compelled, likewise, in even the feeblest effort to implement our thought by act, to make Christ and the Cross the pattern of our doing. If these things are truly so, then we are indeed at a crucial epoch in the history of Christendom, which Matthew Arnold and his father foretold. But the situation has changed since their day in this respect: that we have no longer primarily to concern ourselves, like them, "in reconciling the new intellectual ideas of this age with the religious life". The situation has become more urgent: so that we may rather say that to-day the religious life itself consists in thinking these new ideas, because the ideas themselves are such that they require the self-annulment which only Christian faith can endure, and live.

We have reached a moment of authentic religious reformation, when "the religious life is started upon a fresh period in company with radically new ideas". And, as is surely self-evident, this new unity will not be accomplished by taking the religious life, on the one hand, as a thing fixed, and the new ideas on the other hand, as another fixed thing, and by rearrangement here and mitigation there effecting some sort of compromise between them. For one thing, this is not how a new unity of thought and religion is ever accomplished; for another, the religious life of Christianity, in so far as it is a fixed and accepted thing, is revealing itself as inadequate even faintly to influence the conduct of nations to-day. What must happen, I believe, is a direct

revivification of the religious life in the act of thinking the new thoughts and taking into one's soul the new ideas which are necessary to the thinking of reality to-day.

Chief among the new ideas which are necessary to such a thinking of contemporary reality are the ideas which are roughly comprehended under the term, Marxism. They are drastic, purgative and revolutionary ideas. The fact that they are generally presented to us as a self-sufficient philosophical and religious system, and that this pretension is absurd, does not in the least absolve us from the plain duty of submitting our minds to them in the spirit which is prepared to "try all things and to hold fast to that which is good". The critical idea of Marxism is good, because it is true, and because it is a truth without which the modern world cannot be understood. This critical idea is that, in an industrialized society which is built upon an economy of machine-production, the real relations between individual members of the society are in fact outside their ordinary field of consciousness altogether. Between what they really do, and what they imagine they do, between what they really are and what they imagine they are, there is a great gulf. The relations between members of an industrialized society are really determined by a process which, because it is outside the ordinary field of consciousness, escapes all conscious control, and are therefore determined by what the Marxist calls "necessity".

The ordinary Christian reply to this searching

criticism of the life of man under the autonomy of capitalism is quite futile. The conventional Christian mind affects to be horrified at this idea that the social process in contemporary society is governed by "necessity", for is it not essential to the faith of Christianity that the individual is free to do good or evil? That defence against the truth of Marxism is entirely irrelevant. If I am tied hand and foot, and somebody tells me that I am bound so that I cannot act, it is foolish, it is impious, to reply that "Christianity tells me that I am free". In such a case Christianity is degraded into pious nonsense, which deserves all the contemptuous criticism which Marxism directs against it. The truth is that in the existing economic system the individual is not free to do good or evil as he will, except on one condition, namely, that his will to "depart from iniquity" comprehends a determination to *discover* whether he is actually free to "depart from iniquity" or not.

What Marxism has to tell the individual member of a modern industrial society is that the ordinary man's conception of himself as a responsible, freely deciding person is almost entirely illusory. It tells him that nine-tenths, or even ninety-nine hundredths of him, is the passive and unconscious slave of an economic system which he does not understand, and which he makes no attempt to control. To talk as though Christian conduct in such a society were simply a matter of following the Ten Commandments, or accepting the current social morality and

going to church besides, is contemptible. It is inevitable that such irrelevant religion should be discredited. Unless Christianity is prepared to think to the bottom of its conventional conception of Man, it is bound to become more and more a narcotic.

But a Christianity which regards it as its peculiar function to be ready to think uncomfortable thoughts, is prepared to take to heart all the drastic criticism of capitalist society and capitalist man which Marxism has to offer. For this criticism comes to a genuinely Christian mind as a mighty corroboration of its own deepest insights, as a providential renovation of its most intimate spiritual disciplines. The Christian who has the courage to accept the Marxian analysis of capitalist society may truly say: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" For here, in the increasing bewilderments and barbarities of contemporary mechanical society, the truth of the great Pauline doctrine of "the law of the flesh" is revealed as by a lightning flash; likewise, the truth of the great catholic doctrine of Original Sin. It can be no cause for astonishment to the Christian mind that, in an economic order of which the characteristic is that the physical energy at the disposal of society has been multiplied a thousandfold in the last hundred and fifty years, the natural man by his natural actions should be preparing to bring moral degradation and universal catastrophe upon himself. A Christianity which really believes in the necessity of dying to the old Adam and being reborn into

Christ does not merely accept all the great element of truth in Marxism without any vital surrender, but must even in some sort welcome it as a confirmation of its own insight and an enhancement of its spiritual strength. For Christianity alone can accept this truth without being overwhelmed by it, without capitulating to all that is false in Marxism—the element of crude secular optimism which believes that, somehow and miraculously, out of this abandonment of political and social life to the domination of the “natural man”, a heaven on earth will emerge.

The means by which this miraculous transformation will be accomplished is “the dictatorship of the proletariat”. It is not enough to admit that the history of post-war Europe has plainly shown that the working-class has no intention and no power to dictate, and that what happens when it is foolish enough to say that it intends to do so is that it is dictated to by a satanic Nationalism. It is imperative to realize why this happens and why it must happen. It happens and must happen because, by no conceivable operation of the “ordinary self” of mankind, or any class of mankind, can the “classless society” imagined by Marxist Socialism be brought into being. Such a society will be brought into being by Christian love—“that seeketh not its own”—or not at all. The “natural man” *cannot* do it. And the “natural man” does not change his nature by belonging to the working-class; neither does “the natural man” of the middle-class change his nature

by being received into the proletarian party. In order that the "natural man"—the creature of appetite and selfishness—shall change his nature, he needs to be baptized into something quite different: into the death of Christ, as St. Paul knew and preached. That knowledge and that preaching, that baptism as a real experience, created the Christian Church. It and it alone can create the Christian Church anew; and the triumphant Christian Church alone, into which men are gathered from the East and the West, is the reality of that "classless society" which the Marxist vainly dreams will be created by the "natural" proletarian man.

So Matthew Arnold's prophecy is being realized in circumstances which he did not foresee. That fusion of Hebraism and Hellenism which he believed to be necessary if the degeneration of the new democracy was to be averted is more necessary than ever to-day. Unless it becomes the centre and source of our "education", our education becomes merely an initiation into decay. Only the Christian mind can understand the world to-day; and that is the Christian mind which does in fact unite the selfless spiritual energy of Hebraism with the selfless intellectual honesty of Hellenism: and to-day at any rate the one is impossible without the other. To what final conclusions this new combination of Hebraism and Hellenism will lead us is a matter of relatively little moment beside the importance of understanding that this renovation of the Christian mind is essential and that it cannot be escaped by

any man who is prepared to think reality to-day. That is the beginning; for thus men become instruments fit to do the will of God. That has always been the end of true education; but to-day it is the beginning of it. The very foundations of education have to be laid anew.

CHAPTER VIII

THE JUDGMENT OF DEMOCRACY

THE disruption of the unity of medieval Christendom which, begun many years before, was finally accomplished at the Reformation, can be justified to the Christian imagination. It can indeed be negatively justified as a crude and violent but nevertheless necessary protest against the intolerable corruption of the Papal Curia. But a positive justification, for the Christian imagination, requires that a thing so precious as the unity of Christendom, even though it were but nominal, should be destroyed only in order that it shall be fulfilled. Such a view of the English Reformation was that which Dr. Arnold inherited from Coleridge, and made the foundation of his great work as a Christian educator. Underlying the violence and cupidity of the English Reformation was concealed the "idea" that in England henceforward the civil and the religious societies must be one: the visible Church and the nation were to become identical, and the whole national society was to be committed to the task of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

From this belief, as we have seen, was born the

inspiration of Dr. Arnold's great reform of public-school education in this country, out of which the noble tradition of our Civil Service arose. The probity and disinterestedness of our administrative services are taken for granted to-day; but we have only to compare it with the corruption which was rampant a hundred years ago to realize how recent is this high ideal of "Civil Service". The point to be seized is that the original motive-force in this process of administrative regeneration was the passionate Christian conviction of a very courageous man, who combined in a manner rare in his day a simple devotion to the person of Christ with the new zeal for historical knowledge. We may feel, as indeed his son came to feel, that some of Dr. Arnold's notions of how to secure the Christian homogeneity of English society were foreign to the spirit of the age; but the truth remains that Dr. Arnold had grasped in its concreteness Coleridge's insight, that only in a truly Christian society could the ideal of democracy be realized, and that education, re-inspired by an enlarged conception of the Christian faith, was the form of pastoral ministration appointed to be the means of permeating the new society with the knowledge of its own final purpose.

This pregnant conception of the democratic and national society of England Matthew Arnold inherited and expanded, as we have seen. He was perhaps the finest product of his father's education; and the true aim of the father's work was precisely pursued in the son's dedication of himself to the

cause of national education. The quiet acceptance by the distinguished and fastidious Oxonian of the task of inspecting the elementary schools of the fifties and sixties, of examining the teachers, of moving incessantly among the sordidness and Philistinism that were so grievous to him, is a noble example of the unobtrusive civil heroism which alone can build a great modern nation. But the ideal which was particularly dear to Matthew Arnold's heart was the provision of an adequate system of secondary, or liberal, education by the state. Since his time there has been a very great development of state-aided secondary education; but not in the form, nor with the scope that he desired. What he advocated, in vain, was the provision by the state of a system of true public schools, that is to say, boarding schools providing a liberal education at a low cost. He saw clearly that two distinct things were required: the expansion of the mind by a liberal education, and the formation of the ethos of a ruling-class. The former aim has been sometimes envisaged by our actual system of state-aided secondary education; the latter never. It is hardly less true than it was in Matthew Arnold's day that there are two systems of education in this country: education for the ruling-class, and education for the rest. To the failure of the new democracy to rise to Matthew Arnold's conception of the state, as representing their higher and more permanent selves, and by using the resources of the state in this spirit, to make the best kind of education available for all who could benefit by it,

may largely be ascribed, as we have shown in a previous chapter, the stagnation of the working-class political movement to-day.

Once more, the point to be seized is that the conception of the state as the instrument by which a democratic society is educated to the knowledge of its own nature and purpose, which Matthew Arnold tried in vain to inculcate into the anarchic Liberalism of his day, is a Christian conception. It was the elaboration in the conditions of a later generation of his father's basic principles. What Dr. Arnold had been able to do for the upper middle-class, his son tried to do for the lower: for the predominantly Nonconformist and Liberal small middle-class which followed the lead of the politicians of the Manchester school. It is in fact no wonder that he failed, for the conception of the national society as a Christian society was one to which the Puritan mind was most recalcitrant. For it Christianity was primarily a matter of individual salvation, not of social conduct. The idea that the whole body of citizens was the visible Church, and that within this national and Christian society the functions of the priesthood must now be enlarged; that the priesthood in the old Church must be changed into the educators of the new—this idea was too revolutionary to find entrance into minds which were almost hermetically sealed against the "idea" of a national Church in any form. In any form in which they could have understood it, it would have seemed to them purely reactionary. It would, not unnaturally,

have recalled to them the very recent oppressions of an Established Church which had been in fact the monopoly of an oligarchy, and more vaguely and obscurely the memory of a condition of society which was inseparable from Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and the Whore of Babylon.

Indeed, it was true that what Matthew Arnold had in mind was a new realization of catholic Christianity. It was not merely that his mind, in its assiduous search after "the best that had been known and thought" was inevitably catholic, or that he had come under the influence of the Oxford Movement; it was because, in his unremitting effort to convince the new middle-class of the necessity of achieving a higher conception of the state, and looking to it as the appropriate instrument of education, he had been forced to grapple closely with the sincerity and narrowness, the nobility and obscurantism of the Puritan form of the Christian faith. He who criticized the Nonconformist middle-class so unsparingly, was keenly appreciative of the fund of moral strength which they possessed. In a sense he was of the breed; *il avait passé par là*. Like his father, he had a passion for reforming that which he loved; and it is not too much to say that Matthew Arnold really loved the Nonconformist middle-class. "Nevertheless, they are," he said at the end of one of his most scathing indictments, "the salt of the earth." He knew them well; probably no man of his class and education, certainly no man of equal genius, knew the mid-Victorian Nonconformist

middle-class so well as he: and he was painfully conscious how great a waste of the nation's precious fund of moral energy, of which they possessed much more than an average share, was caused by their pursuit of religious sectarianism. He wanted them to be gathered into the national Church in order that their spiritual energy might be liberated for the true task of establishing a Christian society. In this truly catholic spirit he advocated Christian reunion in England; and in the same spirit he looked beyond England to Europe and the world and dreamed of a new spirit at Rome. "Will there never arise among Catholics some great soul, to perceive that the eternity and universality, which is vainly claimed for Catholic dogma and the ultramontane system, might really be possible for Catholic worship?"

The dream, the ideal, was a universal and international society of national Christian societies, based each upon the conviction that the civil and religious society were one, and that the true aim of each separate nation was to realize the Kingdom of God. The realization would never be complete, for that would signify a final consummation of earthly life, and put a period to the incessant striving after perfection which is the principle of life itself; but the belief in the constant approximation of the earthly to the heavenly city could never be relinquished, without surrendering that claim of Christianity to change the world on which its own eternity depended.

I believe that this conception of a point in the

process of history at which the visible Christian Church and the national society become the same is vital to the continuance of a Christian civilization. If it is abandoned, because it has never been clearly seized, then inevitably the world will be given over to anti-Christian nationalism and spiritual retrogression. The one great chapter in the history of Christendom begins with the fusion of identity between the Christian Church and the Roman Empire; that chapter is drawing to a close. Probably the visible sign of the end is the recent incorporation of the last remnant of the Holy Roman Empire into the German Reich. That consummates, on the one side, the long history of the failure of the Roman Catholic Church to be responsive to the positive and creative force of nationalism; and on the other, in the martyrdom of the Austrian Jews, reveals the demonic power of nationalism when it ceases even nominally to be informed by the spirit of Christianity. If the choice lay between the impotence of Rome and the omnipotence of anti-Christian nationalism, then the Kingdom of God would become entirely transcendent, a Christian polity would be a mirage: and Christian civilization must inevitably perish. But this choice is not final—or not yet. It may be that Christian civilization is indeed doomed; but no Christian can reconcile himself in advance to that prospect. Nor can the faith, however ardent, that the Church of Christ is eternal, and that it would survive—as it surely would—the downfall of this Christian civili-

zation, be truly sustaining. The duty of a Christian is not merely to believe that the Christian Church cannot, but also to strive that Christian civilization shall not, perish. The mission of the Church is to redeem the world; it is eternal only in as far as it contains the redemptive principle of the world: and unless it is at work actively redeeming the world, actually regenerating the very substance of human society, its eternality becomes an illusion.

The choice between the impotence of Rome and the omnipotence of nationalism is not final. There is a third way. But we must conceive it clearly. If the disruption of the medieval unity of Christendom is not to be reckoned as pure disaster (which it cannot be) then we must accept and be inspired by the conviction that the Christian national society is a more vital form of development of the universal Church. We must truly believe that in the new unity of the Christian nation humanity has taken one great blundering step forward towards the concrete realization of the bond of Christian brotherhood; but we must understand that the condition of that step being indeed towards more abundant life is that the national unity shall be conscious, however imperfectly, of itself as a Christian unity. National unity that is not comprehended as the partial realization of a truer Christian unity, and the opportunity for the fuller permeation of society by the ideal of Christian brotherhood, is the unity of the tribal herd: a retrogression from Christian civilization

altogether. In Germany it knows itself as such to-day.

On the more distinct emergence of the idea of this new national and Christian society, I maintain, the continued existence of Christian civilization depends. In order to exist, the national and Christian society must consciously posit its own existence, and understand itself as a true and necessary form of development of the universal Christian Church. It must understand its own nature and structure; and, aware of itself as an actual form of the Christian Church, must oppose itself resolutely to the despairing flight of Christians into sacerdotalism or transcendence. Above all, it must think fearlessly about the state.

For the main organ of this new national and Christian society is the state; the state is, indeed, the organ indispensable to its manifestation. For this reason it is inevitable that in the new national society, if it is to be in some real sense a Christian society, the Church and the state should draw together. On the nature of this drawing together of Church and state, everything depends.

This drawing together takes place in part as the partial coalescence of two visible organizations; but far more significantly, though less visibly, as the gradual emergence of a new conception of the state as an instrument for realizing the Kingdom of God. The state, in such a national and Christian society, now includes the Church: whereby the Church is not secularized, but the state is evangelized. It becomes an enlarged Church. This is the true

"idea" of a Christian democracy, wherein the state performs the functions which in a more primitive form of society were performed by the Church—education, charity, care of the sick, provision for the poor. And at the same time, the equality of men before God and the brotherhood of men in Christ, to which formerly the Church alone bore witness in a society of status, is now at once expanded and materialized into equality of political rights. Just as the significance of national unity derives from the fact that it is a fuller realization of Christian unity, so the significance of political equality derives from its being a realization of Christian brotherhood.

In other words, in the perspective of European history, it is only as a new phase in the growth and increasing realization of the universal Christian Church that the national and democratic society can be understood. The formation of such societies is a necessary part of the process of the evangelization of the world. If the process be considered in its outwardness alone, it will appear as a lamentable disruption of the unity of Christendom; but if it is considered in its inwardness and idea it is a fuller permeation and organization of the world by the gospel of Christ. But the condition of this process not being utterly perverted is that the national and democratic society should be aware of its own Christian purpose, and mindful of its own secret principle of vitality. It is because it is a new form of the Christian Church that it lives and is justified. In the measure in which it comes to believe itself

autonomous, its contact with its source of vitality is diminished, and the springs of its life and spiritual strength dry up.

This inward devitalization becomes manifest in times of stress, when the belief in the "natural rights of man", into which the Christian principles of such a society are secularized, is bewilderingly discovered to be self-contradictory: it becomes evident that by the "natural" exercise of "natural" rights, the "natural" rights of men are destroyed, as they have been destroyed in Germany, and as men begin to fear they may be destroyed in England. Against a secularized society man has no "natural" rights: as Rousseau clearly saw and declared, a natural right against society, when society is conceived as autonomous, is inconceivable, and those who are foolish enough to believe in them will be bitterly undeceived. The naïve belief in natural "rights" presupposes the Christian faith, and if it is detached from that faith it will die the death. Only in a Christian polity can the sacredness of Christian conscience be allowed; and, conversely, any polity in which the sacredness of Christian conscience is allowed is, whether it knows it or not, a Christian polity.

It is by no accident that we have been developing, almost unwittingly, the great Coleridgian position, "that Christianity rightly understood is identical with the highest philosophy, and that, apart from all question of historical evidence, the essential

doctrines of Christianity are necessary and eternal truths of reason—truths which man, by the vouchsafed light of nature and without aid from documents or tradition, may always and everywhere discover for himself”. The connection is not accidental, because Dr. Arnold received his inspiration from Coleridge, and in turn inspired his son. The position was not adequately developed, even by Coleridge himself, in his consideration of Church and state, though his exposition of the internal necessity of a national Church represented by the clerisy (as distinct from though including the clergy) contains the essence of the idea. Of that clerisy, as conceived by Coleridge, Dr. Arnold was the conscious representative, and Matthew Arnold nobly took up the torch from him.

The germ of this idea, as the basis of a political philosophy, Coleridge received from Rousseau. For Rousseau's central conception was that unless men become aware of the nature of the new national society and make it the conscious instrument of their higher selves, the increasing integration of society must produce an increasing degradation of mankind. It is significant that Matthew Arnold, who received his doctrine of society from Coleridge through his father, and so far as I know was not directly influenced by Rousseau, was occupied largely in restating the position of Rousseau. His insistence that the state in the new society must be regarded as the representative of the higher self of its citizens, and that the primary function of the state is the educa-

tion of its citizens into a knowledge of the nature of society—these are Rousseau's fundamental positions. They are Christian positions, though of course they are opposed to that form of Christian political philosophy which regards the Church as *imperium in imperio*. Because he believed that the Oxford Movement tended to take this position, and to regard the English Church as a supernatural institution heterogeneous and detachable from the national society, Dr. Arnold opposed it bitterly; he saw in it a dangerous effort to undo the positive achievement of the English Reformation. Matthew Arnold could afford to be more sympathetic; the danger of Romanizing was past. But the truth appears to be that the *via media* in which Newman at first believed, and in which he could not rest, was misconceived, by being conceived in ecclesiastical terms. The true *via media* between Erastianism and Rome lay where Coleridge and Dr. Arnold discerned it to be—namely, in the conception of the new national society as a Christian society, and a new form of the Christian Church. When that principle was firmly conceived, as it was by Matthew Arnold, there could be nothing but grateful welcome for all the beauty of holiness with which the Oxford Movement had re-endowed the English Church.

This resumption of the catholic tradition of worship by the English Church was indeed entirely to be welcomed, provided that the prior doctrine of the potential identity of the national society and the Church was established. For, as Matthew Arnold

saw, the acknowledgment of the national as the Christian society was the first necessary step towards the creation of a new catholic unity of Christendom. The old unity had done its work; it had become perfunctory, superficial, and parasitic; reaping where it did not sow. The road to the new unity lay through the division of the Roman Church into the new Christian national societies: of which development England was the most pregnant example. As the national societies became penetrated with the knowledge of the principle of their being, the tendency towards religious sectarianism would gradually die down. In the case of England, on the one hand the Nonconformist individualism would put off its anti-social character through its growing sense of the state as representative of the higher Selves of its citizens; on the other hand those of the Anglican tradition would become creatively faithful to their calling by entering into the work of Christian education in the most comprehensive sense: by their work as religious and civil servants, as educators, as priests, by their example of disinterested service of the state, in a word, by their open-handed communication to all who would receive it of genuine Christian culture, purified of its vicious "deference to station and property". Then Christianity would be manifest in its true power, as the only source of a national unity that is neither enforced nor automatic; and as this reality of Christian unity worked through society, like the leaven of the parable, unity of Christian worship would be naturally sought. In

such a society, it would be strange if men did not worship together.

Whether this "idea" of English society shall be no more than a dream, depends on the number of those who are capable of understanding it and dedicating themselves to its realization. But the theme of this book is that, unless a society such as ours is thus conceived and thus believed in, it is irrational, un-Christian and doomed to decay. In simple and traditional language the question is whether England can be true to herself. That fidelity to England's self cannot be assured by instinct any more.

For England to regain the capacity of being true to herself calls now for an unprecedented effort of understanding. The type of society which she represents is under judgment to-day. Unless it can understand itself, I believe, it is doomed; and I believe that the only way it can understand itself is as Coleridge and the Arnolds understood it, as a Christian national society: more significantly still, as a form assumed by the universal Christian Church in the process of its effort to realize the Kingdom of God. The Church in this form is no doubt as imperfect as the Church has always been, as corrupt and contaminated; nevertheless it represents a real and positive advance towards the concrete truth of a Christian society.

England, and I believe France also, is a Christian nation. These Christian nations are being challenged by anti-Christian nations. But, alas, the

situation is not so simple as that. For England is a Christian nation that has forgotten that it is one; it has lost the key to its own nature, and secularized its own principles, so that they have ceased to be dynamic. It has lost the power of moral initiative.

I believe that it can regain it only by education into self-knowledge, and by education based on self-knowledge. The circle is vicious, I know, for "How shall the educators be educated?" as Karl Marx once asked. How can we begin the education of ourselves and our children into the knowledge that we are members of a Christian nation? Into more than the knowledge, into the feeling that we are and that it is our essence that we are members of a Christian nation.

I do not pretend to have a plan, except that I believe that everyone who is penetrated by a veritable idea becomes an educator perforce of those about him. If the idea is true with the truth of life it will not fail to propagate itself; and if the idea that we are a Christian nation is the clue to our destiny it will not fail to make its way to the centre of our thought and being, and establish itself there.

But I am convinced of this: that those who profess and call themselves Christians to-day must be really convinced that Christianity is the clue to all man's doing, if that doing shall be righteous: in the home, in the school, in the business of the individual and the conduct of the nation. If we, members of a Christian nation, go on as we are going now, using Christianity merely as the sanctification of doing

that proceeds from quite other sources than the spirit of God, we shall be razed from the book of honour, and blotted from the book of life: and we shall deserve to be.

It may sound childishly pietistic to declare that in the heart and mind of every Englishman who would be a true Englishman to-day Christ must be enthroned again. I believe it, nevertheless. And I must take the risk of being charged with confusing patriotism and Christianity. There is no such confusion in my soul. Englishmen to-day are sick at heart because they cannot distinguish the voice of patriotism; they hear thunders and alarms and noises, but not the clear voice. I do not believe they will ever hear it again until they listen for the voice of Christ. When they hear Him, they will hear the voice of their country: but not before.

I do not pretend to know what His voice will tell them to do; but I do know He will tell them to do something quite different from what they are doing now. I, personally, am a pacifist; but I would never dare to claim that Christ told me to be one. Christ may, for aught I know, need crusaders still. But I know he needs Christians in the simplest sense—men who are conscious that He is the source of their being, the spirit of their thought, and the judge of their every act. To be a Christian in this sense is the only way, I believe, to be an Englishman to-day.

Though modern war seems to me a blasphemy, somehow I do not greatly care whether Englishmen are moved to be Christian soldiers or Christian

martyrs: only let them be one or the other. What is utterly intolerable is that we should be cowards in the name of Peace. A Christian nation may be a nation of Christian soldiers, or a nation of Christian martyrs; as either, it will be faithful to itself and its God. What it may not be, without betraying both, is a bully towards the weak and a craven before the strong.

The argument of this book has, I hope, made clear the tragic ambiguity of nationalism. On the one hand, the formation of Christian national societies is a genuine advance towards the realization of the Kingdom of God; on the other hand, the disruption of the unity of medieval Christendom has practically destroyed the idea of a super-national spiritual authority. The advance towards the Kingdom in and through the national society is virtually nullified by the retreat from the Kingdom involved in the disruption of the international Christian society. And the condition of the world seems desperate, because the powers of destruction now gathered into the hands of the national societies are tremendous: they are, indeed, identical with the tremendous powers of production which have enabled the national societies to knit themselves so closely together. The powers of production are as tragically ambiguous as nationalism itself.

To pretend that there is any simple issue from this grim situation is self-delusion. It is easy enough to see that international Socialism must supply the

rough outline of the solution, if we may look forward to one at all. But international Socialism as it has hitherto been conceived has revealed its fatal weakness: it is built upon a false conception of man as a mere unit in an economic system. Just as arbitrarily as the Utilitarian philosophy before it, it has substituted an anatomical diagram for the living reality of man and society. Hence, in order to bridge the gap between the schema and the reality, it has been necessary to change Social Democracy into a dictatorial system in order to realize it at all. Communism is, in fact, Social Democracy brought down to brass tacks. The Russian Social Democratic movement had to choose between its democracy and its Socialism; it chose the latter. And thereby it dealt a terrible blow to the Christian and democratic evolution of Europe.

Russia alone does not bear the blame. Even more to blame, it seems to me, are the democratic countries which were victorious in the Great War. The democratic governments of England and France behaved towards defeated Germany with more ruthlessness, and less sense of responsibility, than any absolutist or oligarchical government in a like situation before them. This was, no doubt, partly due to the nature of the war itself: it was more of a life-and-death struggle, the national masses were more deeply involved in it, than in any previous war. The democracies in the moral crisis of victory revealed that they were enormous aggregations of "natural" men; and that the qualities which most easily carry

a leader of mass-democracy to success in time of crisis are demagogic rather than statesmanlike. There can be little doubt that if it could have been left to the most cynical diplomats of the old school to frame the Treaty of Versailles, the treaty would have been a far better and more Christian document than it was. But the herd-emotions that have to be aroused in keeping a mass-nation at war are such that responsible statesmanship can hardly be employed in concluding peace.

Thus the democracies betrayed their own "idea". For if it be true, as we contend, that the vital principle of democracy is Christian—that it is rational and viable only in so far as it is an approximation towards the Kingdom of God—then in so far as it behaves in its international relations in a definitely anti-Christian fashion, repudiating not only the idea of forgiveness and generosity, but even that of moderation towards a defeated enemy, it becomes irrational in the deepest and most significant sense of the word: it becomes unfit to live, and enters upon a period of slow and perhaps invisible, but inevitable decline. The contrast between the profession of English democracy during the War, and its behaviour at the end of it was, from this point of view, peculiarly shocking. For its profession was democratic and Christian: it had "no quarrel with the German people". But its practice was diabolical. It enforced a hunger-blockade upon the German people for nearly a year after the Armistice; and then, in spite of the fact that they had adopted

a democratic system of government, exacted an absolutely crushing indemnity from them. This was the action not of a Christian democracy but of a barbaric horde. And even that judgment is unjust to barbarism.

On the other hand, Russia, in which a naïve and primitive Christianity was still potent, and which might, from its reserves of virgin spiritual strength, have brought a vast accession of religious faith to the "idea" of democracy, was brought out of chaos by a body of resolute and fanatical men who chose Socialism rather than democracy. The influence upon Germany was disastrous. The behaviour of the victorious allies had intolerably weakened the never robust German faith in democracy: the Russian example fatally divided what strength remained to it. Between the dictatorial Socialism of Communism, created by the Russians, and the National Socialism of Hitler, created by the Allies, the infant democracy of Germany was strangled.

It is dangerous to generalize in abstract terms, above all in a world in which Christian forms and Christian essences are separated more completely perhaps than they have been before; but I believe that we make the nearest approach to the difficult truth if we say that the real issue in the world of Europe since 1914 has been whether democracy would recognize itself, and be recognized, as a Christian thing.

If we regard the democratic society as a true development of the Christian Church, then the

reason for the opposition to it of the anti-Christian systems of Communism and National Socialism is plain. For the condition on which the democratic national society is, in fact, a true development of the Christian Church is that the Christian doctrine that human personality is sacred, because man is made in the image of God, receives fuller expression in such a society. So long as the Christian Church is content to hold that the requirements of this doctrine are satisfied by membership of the Church itself, and that they need no further expression, political or social, so long it in effect maintains that the Kingdom of God is purely transcendent. No theological finesse can avoid this conclusion, for in any society the Church must either acquiesce in, or protest against, the action of a state which does not respect human personality. The theory of a non-political Christian Church is nonsense, and corresponds to no reality, save the abrogation by the Church of its function, which is to judge the actions of the powers that be by Christian principles. But that does not mean that the Church should participate in what are called "politics". It is, and must be, concerned with propagating and defending political principles that lie deeper than "politics".

The deepest of these principles is that of respect for the human personality. Respect for human personality is impossible to define, nor is it easy to catalogue what subordinate political principles are actually involved in it. But it would probably be universally agreed that it involved equality before

the law: although that, as English history has painfully demonstrated, is a meagre protection for the sacredness of human personality. When all men were liable to be hanged for stealing a sheep, it was the starving ones who went to the gallows. Therefore it is necessary to see that people are not driven to steal sheep by the pangs of hunger. And in any case it seems self-evident that the principle of respect for human personality calls for a constant effort towards the establishment of greater social justice, though social justice is not to be mechanically defined. Equally, it appears to involve the securing of freedom of thought and expression to the utmost extent compatible with the well-being of society as a whole. And it seems obvious that the only practical safeguard of all those conditions which are involved in securing respect for the human personality is democracy.

But it is equally obvious that democracy is a delicate and precarious thing, and that its security and health depend on the highest possible degree of true education and civic responsibility in its citizens. Therefore it is no wonder that at the present time it is doubtful whether democracy can survive the corruption of a European situation which has been largely created by the ignorance and savagery of the victorious democracies in 1918. The nature of that self-degradation was indeed acutely felt by the democratic remnant of those days: there passed through it a shudder of horror and a vague premonition of a fearful retribution to come for the

betrayal of justice and honour and the self-sacrifice of the dead. But we could not understand the horror; we felt it, but we could not grasp the inexorable laws of God that were being insulted. The Church whose duty it was to understand our offending and to warn us of the judgment of God was apparently unconscious that there was an offence at all. No wonder then that we turned aside from the Church: we sought blindly for a wisdom that would make us understand the sin of which our consciences apprised us. The wisdom did not exist: or rather the wisdom existed and was eternal, but the wise men did not. The Truth was there, where it had always been, on Calvary, saying to God, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do", saying to men, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of"; but the prophets and the priests of the Truth were silent.

The truth was simple enough. It was that democracy cannot exist without Christianity. Faith in democracy, if it is not faith in an idol, is faith in Christ. Democracy lives, and can live, only in so far as it strives to be Christian. Christianity created it, breathed into it the breath of life, and inspires it from day to day and year to year. If democracy ceases to receive and obey that inspiration, why then it becomes, not merely an empty piece of political apparatus, not merely a discredited experiment in society, not merely an ignoble agglomeration of human beings incapable of indignation or honour or generosity, it becomes something of another order entirely from this. For a democracy verit-

ably is a Church of Christ. The visible church within it is only the guardian of its tradition of worship: the democracy itself is the Church indeed. When a democracy ceases to be inspired, however crudely and roughly, by the spirit of Christ; when it spews the coal of fire out of its mouth, and tramples on a beaten enemy not in an access of rage (for that is human) but in a spirit of craven fear; when it starves the enemy's little ones after he has surrendered, and strives to break his will-to-live; when it makes of the beaten country one vast concentration-camp, which it abandons only because it costs too much to superintend—why, then, democracy becomes not barbaric, but something new in the history of the human race: something new, and therefore impossible to describe: a Christian society which has reverted, and bears the marks of its apostasy upon it.

Apostate democracy—in such a phrase is, I believe, the clue to the condition of Europe to-day. We can truly understand it not as a struggle of Fascism against Communism; nor of Democracy against Fascism; nor even, as we tried to formulate it in the course of this attempt to reach the truth, of Christianity against Nationalism. Perhaps it is a mistake to conceive it as a struggle at all. It is rather a linked retrogression, a competition of apostate democracies in apostasy, a mutual out-bidding of apostate Christian societies in surrender of the vestiges of Christian honour, Christian justice, and Christian faith.

But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless place seeking rest and findeth it not. Then he saith, I will return to my house whence I came out: and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first.

What I mean by Christian education is such an instruction of children and youths and men that the conception of an apostate democracy shall have meaning for them, and arouse in them a sense of disgust and dismay. They would learn from this education that such a phrase is not a metaphor, not a strange and hybrid mingling of a judgment of one order with a condition of another order, not an application of a religious and Christian epithet to a civil and secular society, but a true definition of the condition of human society in which we live to-day: a Christian civilization that has forgotten God, and dares not remember Him.

EPILOGUE

WHAT then is the price of leadership in the world to-day? It is, first of all, clearly to conceive and firmly to hold that what is in issue to-day is the life or death of Christian civilization.

Christian civilization, which up to the war of 1914-1918, was struggling blindly towards a more abundant life, then began to be threatened by democratic nationalism. Hitherto, nationalism had not been avowedly anti-Christian; but the behaviour of nationalist England and nationalist France in 1918 to their beaten enemy was definitely anti-Christian. Nationalism is not necessarily anti-Christian. It becomes anti-Christian when it denies the equality of men and nations before the law: for the recognition of that equality is the mark of a Christian society. It becomes still more profoundly anti-Christian when it seeks to establish the inherent superiority of one nation to another: for that is a direct denial of the fundamental principle of Christianity. England and France committed these sins towards Germany in 1918. It is not to be wondered at that Germany commits them, more deliberately and more vehemently to-day.

To anti-Christian nationalism only Christian

nationalism can be opposed. But Christian nationalism is a contradiction in terms, unless the national society is conscious of itself as a truly Christian society, whose members are knit together not by economics, nor by blood, but by their common citizenship of a Christian commonwealth—a membership one of another which depends for its abiding reality upon the common acknowledgment of God, revealed in Christ, as the supreme reality. No actual society can claim to be such a Christian national society; in the nature of things there can be only approximations towards it. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the remaining European democracies represent various approximations towards it. If they have become, as they have, unconscious of their Christian origins; if they have, as England and France did in 1918, sinned grievously against their own Christian morality—still they have not deliberately broken with their Christian tradition, and have not openly declared allegiance to an anti-Christian principle.

But only if they become conscious of themselves as Christian national societies can Christian civilization be saved from the horror of *felo de se*. To propagate that consciousness is the task of Christian education, in each several society. Christian education, in this sense, is simply education into the truth of things. Education which is not Christian, in this sense, makes men insensible of the degradation which must inevitably overtake a society which remains ignorant of the laws of its own life.

Only by such an education can the ruling-class necessary to a Christian national society be created. A ruling-class is necessary to any form of society. The ruling-class in a Christian national society must be chosen on Christian principles: it must be gathered from the widest possible range of citizens, and its members must be grounded in and inspired by a Christian understanding of society and their function within it. The ruling-class in a Christian national society is a veritable Christian "order". To pretend that such a conception is contrary to democracy is merely to be deceived by a catchword. Democracy in fact has always depended for its functioning on a ruling-class: but the continuance of its life depends upon the ruling-class being consciously Christian. A ruling-class educated on any other principle will betray and destroy democracy.

Democracy is justified as an approximation to a Christian ordering of society; and historically English democracy is largely derivative from the struggle for religious freedom. That struggle proceeded from a conviction of the unique value of the individual man as the child of God. That conviction, historically and ideally, is the foundation of English democracy. But the foundation turns from rock to sand if the citizen of English democracy forgets that the acknowledgment of that divine relation, and the obligations which it imposes, is the condition on which his political freedom shall not enure to his own enslavement. By a natural but grievous paradox it has been made difficult to remember this

truth, because the very fervour with which the English sects defended their right to an individual relation with God made them fiercely hostile to the establishment by the state of any universal education into Christianity. Thus it is that democratic education in a democratic society created by Christian zeal is almost entirely non-Christian.

But non-Christian education is anti-democratic education; because a democratic system can be apprehended as a rational system only in so far as it is regarded as based on the distinction between the lower and the higher self in the individual citizen, and as dependent for its validity and vitality upon the subordination of the lower self to the higher. This voluntary and creative self-subordination can be taught by Christianity alone as universal truth accessible to all, for in Christianity it is revealed in a Person and made operative by his aid. Unless this self-subordination is learned through Christianity, it will not be learned at all; and a different and destructive subordination—not of the lower to the higher self, but of the individual to the state—will be enforced by the state itself in order to its own continued existence.

Democracy, said Plato who knew not Christianity, leads to tyranny; and Christianity alone can save democracy from this nemesis: because democracy, unless it is incessantly revived by the regeneration of its individual members, by Christian education, into the citizens of a Christian society, must degenerate into totalitarianism. The choice before

democracy is simple: either the individual must learn to conquer his lower self and attain his true personality, as a citizen of a Christian society; or the democratic state, abandoned to be the instrument of the lower selves of its members, will enforce upon them a uniformity which is destructive of the whole personality. A modern industrial and democratic society, by reason of its economic complexity, cannot suffer itself to become anarchical. If it is not permitted to develop creatively into a Christian society, it *must* become a totalitarian tyranny.

Unfortunately, Christianity—beguiled partly by a false conception of spirituality, and partly by an evil deference to property and power—has shrunk from acknowledging that democracy is the appropriate form of a Christian society; and that in a modern industrial society the conventional conception of Christian man and Christian morality is entirely inadequate. It has delayed to recognize that the actual conduct of the individual in an industrialized society is largely outside the field of the conventional Christian consciousness. By this failure to acknowledge the real nature of contemporary society and of man within it, it has made inevitable a deep divorce between Christian worship and Christian conduct, and indeed largely emptied the conception of Christian conduct of positive meaning. So that, for the great majority of Christians to-day, the concept of Christian education has no content.

That is because Christianity has shrunk from paying the price of its own continued vitality: which is

indeed no less than that to save our lives we must lose them. But the true purpose of Christianity is to give men the strength to think reality and to know the truth; it is the means, and the only means, by which men and society can bear the burden of self-knowledge. By its power alone can men acknowledge the truth, and discover that the truth has made them free. All therefore that is required, in order that the concept of Christian education may be filled with a content rich as reality, and co-extensive with knowledge, is that Christianity should be true to itself.

True to itself, having paid the price of its own intellectual and moral integrity, Christianity will have no difficulty in believing that it is, in simple verity, the sole means to the salvation of society and civilization. Having no difficulty in believing it, it will have no backwardness in teaching it; for it will have discovered, with the joy of a blessed awakening, that a Christian society is the only one in which men can live and not die, that Christian conduct is the only conduct that can fill men with the steady glow of creative purpose, and that Christian education alone can bring men to the knowledge of these simple and age-old, yet ever-revolutionary, truths.

A national Church (said F. D. Maurice) must believe in the highest sense that what *is* is right. This is the pillar of her own existence. This is what she opposes to the maxim of the world, that things are right which we make so by our rules and

conventions; therefore, she must teach her children to ask bravely and boldly, "What is?" encouraging them by all means to expect an answer; teaching them in what frame of mind to wait for it, to receive it, and to give thanks for it.

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